AFRICAN AMERICAN CITIZEN SOLDIERS IN GALVESTON AND SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, 1880-1906

A Thesis

by

JOHN PATRICK BLAIR

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2007

Major Subject: History

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee, Joseph G. Dawson, III
Committee Members, Charles E. Brooks
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ABSTRACT

African American Citizen Soldiers in

Galveston and San Antonio, Texas, 1880-1906. (December 2007)

John Patrick Blair, B.S., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Joseph G. Dawson, III

The Texas Volunteer Guard, created by the Militia Law of 1879, continued to allow African Americans to serve as citizen soldiers. From 1880 to 1906 over six hundred black men faithfully served in the various state militia companies of Galveston and San Antonio; yet, their service has rarely obtained scholarly attention. Often discounted by historians as mere social clubs or deemed too few and insignificant to warrant study, these men sought not only to demonstrate their citizenship, but to improve their social status during a period of racial segregation.

The differences and similarities of these groups of African American men at the grassroots level are illuminated by using the comparative method to examine socio-economic characteristics. Furthermore, this examination demonstrates how racial attitudes remained flexible enough during this period to allow these men to participate in military-type activities.

An examination of these activities, both as citizens and as soldiers, makes evident what inspired this state military service. Framed within the network of local fraternal, social, religious, educational, and political organizations, coupled with a study

of previous military service, the militia companies expose the aim of these African American men to improve their social status as citizens through militia participation. The Adjutant General of Texas issued firearms, ammunition, and equipment to the respective companies of African American militiamen from these cities, and coordinated training exercises, which involved the travel of armed black men over the state's existing railroads.

Despite their segregated status, the very presence of armed, uniformed black men officially sanctioned by the Democratic-controlled government of Texas suggests that race relationships still remained flexible enough during this time for African Americans to display their citizenship and manhood through state military service. Conversely, their dissolution in 1906 reveals the termination of that flexibility and solidified their status as second-class citizens. Even though they were unsuccessful in continuing their military organization, the heroic efforts of these men deserves inclusion in the written history of the long struggle for African American civil rights in this country.

DEDICATION

To my wife and children

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my committee chair, Dr. Dawson, and my committee members, Dr. Brooks and Dr. Burk, for their constant guidance and selfless assistance during the course of my research.

I also would like to recognize the contributions of Ms. Jerelyn Williams and Mr. Ira Lott of the African American Genealogical Association of San Antonio, Mr. Oscar Gooden of St. Paul's Methodist Church, and fellow historian Roger D. Cunningham for their efforts in preserving African American history.

Lastly, a heartfelt thanks to my wife, who often accompanied me on research trips, sitting quietly for hours, for her patience and unwavering support to me throughout the course of my research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: FROM THE ASHES OF RECONSTRUCTION

The end of the Civil War brought freedom to thousands of African American slaves; yet, the Reconstruction period that followed was characterized by economic hardship for America's newest citizens coupled with political and racial violence throughout the South. In Texas, Republican Governor Edmund J. Davis, who had won strong support from the former slaves in the election of 1870, was despised and hated by many whites. When Davis contested his loss in the governor's race in 1874, he barricaded himself in the State Capitol and used black and white members of the state militia in an attempt to maintain his office. His actions only cemented his reputation as a radical and further increased white hatred for the "Negro" militia.

The black militia units represented two aspects of Reconstruction that most white Texans found to be completely unacceptable – it mixed both blacks and whites together, even placing blacks, in some instances, over whites, and gave African American men weapons to use as Davis' instrument of political coercion.

Therefore, once the Democratic Party regained political control of the governor's mansion and both legislative houses, one would expect the immediate destruction of this surviving instrument of Republican governance. Anglo racial attitudes of the late nineteenth century, arguably unchanged since before the Civil War, supposedly could not accept any condition allowing blacks to carry firearms, actively participate in

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This thesis follows the style and format of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

military activities or assemble in large groups for any purpose other than religious observances. The old and prevailing fear of slave rebellions kept such practices outlawed in the pre-Civil War South; however, even after the Democrats resumed political control of the state, several communities witnessed the formation of local black militia companies officially authorized by the office of Texas Adjutant-General.

The Texas Adjutant-General organized black militia companies from Austin, Brenham, Bryan, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Galveston, Houston, San Antonio, and Waco into the First Regiment, Colored Infantry. The regiment's early history was filled with erratic growth. The Hubbard Rifles in Waco and Gregory Rifles in Bryan both disbanded in 1881 followed by the companies in Corpus Christi in 1882 and Brenham in 1884. The black militia company from Dallas organized and disbanded on four different occasions through the 1880s and the city of Houston's company experienced similar turmoil. This pattern continued throughout the decade of the 1880s except in the cities of San Antonio and Galveston. The black militia companies from these two cities, joined by newly formed units in Austin, Bryan, and later, Seguin, would form the First Battalion, Colored Infantry in 1887. This battalion would remain in existence for over ten years until it too similarly disbanded. However, throughout most of the twenty-six year period from 1880 to 1906, two black militia companies continued to successfully function within their respective communities. Those companies, the Excelsior Guards of San Antonio and the Lincoln Guards of Galveston, are the focus of this thesis.

African American militia in Texas and other states have long been overlooked by historians. Military scholars struggle to evaluate the performance of these citizen soldiers in terms of discipline, courage or martial prowess on the battlefield because they never fought any actual military engagements. It would be unfair and unreasonable to evaluate their existence within such a context. However, one cannot overlook the political and social struggles they experienced.

The bulk of the research concerning the African American military experience from the 1870s to 1906 focuses either on the famed "buffalo soldiers" of the regular army who fought the Plains Indians or the volunteer and regular U.S. Army units that fought the war with Spain at the turn of the century. While some of these African Americans who mustered to fight the Spaniards had served in militia units, they comprised only a small percentage of the total militia force within the United States. Since the governor of Texas failed to activate any of the state's units during this crisis, the men who served from the Lone Star State for the most part have only received brief mention. Christian G. Nelson's thesis, "The Texas Militia from Reconstruction to the End of the Spanish-American War," and Allan R. Purcell's dissertation, "The History of the Texas Militia, 1835-1903," are examples of works that examine the structure and activities of the militia forces in Texas, yet only briefly acknowledge the participation of African American units.[1]

[1] Allan Robert Purcell, "The History of the Texas Militia" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1981). Christian Gotthard Nelson, "History of the Texas Militia from Reconstruction to the End of the Spanish-American War" (master's thesis, Trinity University, 1961).

Furthermore, some historians minimize or degrade African American militia service and activities. Alwyn Barr, writing in *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1971,* asserts that these men "served primarily ceremonial and social functions."[2] Howard Rabinowitz concurs in his work entitled *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890.* He contends that these "military companies fulfilled the same social functions . . ." and that "many young men of different backgrounds grasped the opportunity to associate with them [the black community's business and political leaders] and to wear a fancy uniform."[3] Lawrence Rice supports the insignificance of these units. Rice argues that "no record of their use for other than parade purposes was found" in *The Negro in Texas, 1874-1900.*[4] Lastly, in his study, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937,* Kenneth Mason focuses on the presence of regular army troops garrisoned at Fort Sam Houston. Mason contributes only brief statements about the militia on a few pages throughout his extensive study and argues that "white civic leaders bent on maintaining their paternal authority over the local African American population kept black soldiers out of the city or at a distance."[5]

Historians interested in the development of the citizen soldier and the National Guard have mostly overlooked black militiamen as well, or in some instances,

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[2] Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of Negroes in Texas, 1528-1995*, 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 86.

[3] Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 228.

[4] Lawrence D. Rice, *The Negro in Texas, 1874-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 270.

[5] Kenneth Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 168.

completely ignored their service. In the *History of the Militia and the National Guard*, John Mahon asserts that "when the Democrats returned to power in state after state of the ex-Confederacy, they terminated the black militia, disarmed the blacks, and excluded them from any role in the militia."[6] Jerry Cooper examines African American participation more closely in *The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920*. Yet, even Cooper contends that "the very process by which companies came to life – incorporation through a civil organization – resembled the ways in which social clubs and fraternal organization functioned."[7] In his dissertation, "The History of the Texas Militia, 1835-1903," Purcell fails to expand the black militia's activities beyond two pages and even utilizes Lawrence Rice's incorrect quote regarding black militia not being used for anything "other than parade purposes." Purcell quickly discounts the activities and status of these men when he argues that "the Black units sunk to military insignificance."[8] Charles Johnson, however, presents their service in more positive terms in his book *African American Soldiers in the National Guard*. Johnson contends that "experience in the National Guard afforded former soldiers and recruits the opportunity to participate in militia activities" and "were

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[6] John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 109.

[7] Jerry Cooper, The *Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 68-9.

[8] Purcell, "Texas Militia," 262.

available for militia duties during any civil disturbance, major disaster, or declaration of war."[9]

Some of the best work on African American participation in the militia and National Guard includes the research of Lowell D. Black on Ohio volunteers. His dissertation, titled "The Negro Volunteer Militia Units of the Ohio National Guard, 1870-1954: The Struggle for Military Recognition and Equality in the State of Ohio," examines "the service record of Ohio Negro volunteers, from their arrival in the Northwest Territory to their participation in the Korean Conflict." Even though Black makes a contribution to this field of study, he only commits ten pages out of three hundred and fifty-two to the period from 1870 to 1898.[10]

Other researchers who specialize in the field of African American military history also are brief in their treatment of this subject and period. Alwyn Barr, moving beyond his earlier view of black militia, contributed a succinct article entitled "The Black Militia of the New South: Texas as a Case Study" in 1978. Barr acknowledges that "the existence and significance of black militia units in the New South have proved elusive for historians." In this article, Barr quickly points out the erroneous conclusions of both John D. Foner, who in *Blacks and the Military in American History* contends that "'after the end of Reconstruction, blacks were almost entirely excluded from militias in

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[9] Charles Johnson, *African American Soldiers in the National Guard* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1992), 43.

[10] Lowell Dwight Black, "The Negro Volunteer Militia Units of the Ohio National Guard, 1870-1954: The Struggle for Military Recognition and Equality in the State of Ohio" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1976), ii.

the South,'" and of Richard Hofstadter, who argues "'that by 1877, with the defeat of radical reconstruction, the last of the Negro militias was dissolved.'"[11] Through his research Barr expanded his earlier contention to assert that "the activities of the black militia reflected desires for social status, leadership opportunities, and means of self-defense."[12]

Additional works include those by Roger Dryden Cunningham and Frances Smith. These authors study African American participation in the militia from two southern states that activated their black volunteers for service in the war with Spain. Smith's research, "Black Militia in Savannah, Georgia: 1872-1905," provides a local analysis that relies heavily on newspaper accounts and lacks detailed social information on the citizen soldiers who served in the various companies. Moreover, Smith fails to question if there were changes to the composition of the militia as local and state governments moved from Republican to Democratic control. Cunningham's research examines black volunteers from Virginia beginning in 1872 through 1899. His study is more traditional military history that does not incorporate the social or political activities which characterize works of the "new" military history.[13]

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[11] Alywn Barr, "The Black Militia of the New South: Texas as a Case Study," *Journal of Negro History* 63 (December, 1978), 209-16. Barr quotes Jack D. Foner, *Blacks and the Military in American History* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 68 and Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace, eds., *American Violence: A Documentary History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 16.

[12] Barr, "Black Militia," 216.

[13] Frances Smith, "Black Militia in Savannah, Georgia, 1872-1905" (master's thesis, Georgia Southern College, 1981); Roger Dryden Cunningham, "They Are as Proud of Their Uniform as Any Who Serve Virginia: African American Participation in the Virginia Volunteers, 1872-99," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 110, no. 3 (2002): 293-338; Roger Dryden Cunningham, "Breaking the Color Line: The Virginia Militia at the National Drill, 1887," *Virginia Cavalcade* 49, no. 4 (2000): 178-87.

This thesis incorporates the period almost immediately following reconstruction and continues through to the "federalization" of the National Guard following the 1903 legislation sponsored by U.S. Senator Charles Dick (R-Ohio) to the official dismissal of black militia units in Texas in 1906. During these years the Texas militia was officially designated as the "Texas Volunteer Guard." Texas had just experienced the return of predominately Democratic-controlled local and state governments and the governor as commander-in-chief occupied a pivotal role. The fluctuating economy, labor unrest, rising immigration and more importantly, the strains of political and racial conflict, resulted in times of turmoil and uncertainty. It was within this state of affairs that the black militia maintained its existence for over two decades.

Following the genre of the "new" military historians, this thesis will examine aspects of the lives of the men who comprised local black militia companies during this period who resided in the cities of San Antonio and Galveston. Who were these men who formed the units officially designated as Companies A and C of the First Battalion, Colored Infantry? Their activities as civilians and their experiences as soldiers within the Texas state militia system will dispel the argument that these companies were mere "social clubs" and will illustrate a general desire to improve conditions within the black community. These black militiamen, like their white counterparts, possessed a sense or an awareness of the meaning of citizenship exemplified through the right to bear arms, to assemble and to duly elect their leaders. This ability to select their own leadership arguably made these militia companies among the most democratic organizations within the black community. Although engulfed within an increasingly segregated society

within the cities in which they lived, suppressed by an inferior economic status, and limited in their actions as citizen soldiers, the men of the Excelsior and Lincoln Guards not only maintained their existence, but continued to press for their rights within the existing social structure. Through the examination of these two companies, a wider view of the social, political, military and racial conditions within these two cities and the State of Texas will be possible.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

The morning of September 24, 1890 broke with the sun shining brightly above the city of San Antonio. Under the command of Major Jacob Lyons, the men of the First Battalion, Colored Infantry, Texas Volunteer Guard assembled on Franklin Square. At 8:30 a.m. these African American militiamen were called to attention, and following an inspection by Lyons, commenced to parade through the city of San Antonio. The battalion marched along Commerce Street, crossing both Military Plaza and the Main Plaza, on to Houston Street, and then San Pedro Avenue to their destination located at San Pedro Springs. The *San Antonio Daily Express* described their presence in the city by acclaiming, ". . . the colored troops made a very fine showing nearly 200 men being in line and frequent expressions of approbation could be heard in the crowd of onlookers."[1] This parade was the opening event of the annual colored militia encampment. Only the day previous the *Express* had reported that "the incoming trains yesterday were crowded with colored people coming to attend the encampment."[2] While the Illinois and Great Northern Railway brought militiamen from Austin and Bryan, the Southern Pacific and Aransas Pass transported those attending from Galveston. Of the early two hundred militiamen who arrived to participate in the 1890 encampment,

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[1] "In the Armor of Mars," *San Antonio Daily Express*, September 25, 1890.

[2] "Railroad Rumblings," *San Antonio Daily Express,* September 24, 1890.

Galveston and San Antonio were represented more prominently than any other cities in Texas.

The black citizen soldiers from these two cities marched proudly that September morning as members of Galveston's Lincoln Guards and San Antonio's Excelsior Guards. They represented a social cross-section of San Antonio's and Galveston's African American communities. Various military and civilian documents provide details about the identities of these men illustrating their social and economic backgrounds. The social dynamics between a small faction of upper to middle-class blacks and the larger laboring majority illustrate a degree of African American solidarity within the black militia. And, while employment stability affected the ebb and flow of its members, the black citizen soldiers in these cities overcame such fiscal difficulties and survived for almost three decades. This suggests the militia's level of importance to the black community and further, in a much broader context, a level of flexibility, or tolerance by the majority of white society in both cities as evidenced by this parade of uniformed, black soldiers under arms in San Antonio.

Constitutional amendments and the subsequent federal legislation enacted prior to this military procession had abolished slavery, gave African Americans the right to vote, to serve on juries, hold elected office, and other freedoms and rights enjoyed by fellow citizens of the United States. When federal troops withdrew direct support from Republican state governments, signaling the end of Reconstruction, opponents of African American civil rights sought to unravel the political progress that blacks had enjoyed since the end of the Civil War. Throughout the South, state governments passed

legislation requiring literacy or property tests and the payment of a poll tax prior to casting one's vote in an effort to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment, which barred governments from restricting black citizens' right to vote based upon race, color, or previous condition of servitude,. Social segregation became firmly entrenched through lawful measures following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* that upheld the constitutionality of "the separate but equal" doctrine in 1896. In Texas, its small population of African Americans initially dispelled any political threat to the controlling Democratic Party's policies. However, fusion politics, a practice of the state's Republican Party involving the support of third party candidates, emerged and changed the political scene. Support of a Greenback candidate in the gubernatorial race in 1882 initiated this process that later included the backing of Farmers' Alliance and Populist candidates in 1888 and 1896, respectively. In 1895, Galveston instigated its dismantling of African American political representation by enacting at-large elections for city officials, thus eliminating black ward leaders. And, in San Antonio, the birth of the "Lily-White" faction of the Republican Party by former Texas Secretary of State James Pearson Newcomb around 1884 commenced a ten year internal struggle for political control of the state's Republicans. Even as efforts continued to disenfranchise African Americans, together they created some economic opportunities for themselves, took steps to educate their young, organized politically, and virtually crafted their own identity through this period. These events, both negative and positive, served as the

backdrop in which mostly young African American males enlisted into the local community's militia company.[3]

Prior to 1890, both San Antonio and Galveston had previously established African American militia traditions. San Antonio organized its first "colored" militia company in 1875 with the formation of the Coke Rifles, named for the Democratic governor Richard Coke, and Galveston followed a year later with three companies – the Island City Rifles, the Galveston Rifles, and the Lincoln Guards. Most of these earlier units existed for only a few years and not much is known of the members or activities of these companies during their early histories. Two companies in Galveston dissolved after only two years. The Coke Rifles in San Antonio failed to survive much longer, disbanding in 1882. Yet, in neither city did the African American militia tradition end.[4]

When the Sixteenth Legislature of the State of Texas officially created the Texas Volunteer Guards (T.V.G.) in 1879, the Lincoln Guards gained official recognition as Company C, First Colored Infantry, T.V.G., from the Adjutant General's office on September 12, 1879. Eight months later the black community of Galveston created an additional company, the Grant Rifles, officially designated Company K, on May 21,

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[3] *Race, Class, and Politics in Southern History: Essays in Honor of Robert F. Durden,* ed. Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Charles L. Flynn, Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000); Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics, Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974); Kenneth Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998); Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); *The Revised Statutes of Texas,* Title LXIV, Militia Law (Galveston: A. H. Belo & Company, 1879).

[4] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas* (Galveston: New Book and Job Office, 1881), 24.

1880. These two African American militia companies invariably operated with one another, sharing the same armory on the northeast corner of 28th Street and Avenue L in the city's Eighth Ward beginning in 1882. When the Grant Rifles disbanded in 1885 a few of its members enlisted with the Guards. In San Antonio, the Excelsior Guards organized almost immediately upon the dissolution of the Coke Guards. Electing officers on October 6, 1882, this company officially became Company A, First Colored Infantry, T.V.G., on July 25, 1883.[5]

When the United States went to war with Spain in 1898, the governor of Texas, Charles Allen Culberson, a Democrat, refused to activate the Battalion of Colored Infantry. Acquiring political support from their U.S. congressman, Robert Bradley Hawley (R-Texas), a group of Galveston's African American citizens, referring to themselves as the Hawley Guards, mustered in as a company of the Ninth Regiment of U.S. Volunteers on June 30, 1898. Eighty-two of the Island City's residents comprised Company G of this volunteer regiment and saw action in Cuba. Its roster contained only two individuals, Second Lieutenant Wallace D. Seals and First Sergeant Burnett Mapson, who had previously served with the Lincoln Guards.[6]

Upon their return to the United States in 1899, the Hawley Guards replaced the

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[5] Roster of Texas Volunteer Guard, January 1, 1882, Record Group 401, Texas State Archives (cited hereafter TSA), Austin; Morrison & Fourmy's *General Directory of the City of Galveston, 1882-83* (Galveston: Morrison & Fourmy, 1882), 102; Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, ibid. (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards); Election roll, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., ibid. (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards); Adjutant General, State of Texas, S.O. 43, July 25, 1883, ibid.

[6] Roger Dryden Cunningham, "'A Lot of Fine, Sturdy Black Warriors': Texas's African American 'Immunes' in the Spanish-American War," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 108 (January 2005): 345-67; Muster-in roll, Company G, Ninth U.S.V.I., Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Lincoln Guards as Company C, First Colored Infantry, T.V.G. sometime in 1900. While his company enrolled mostly non-veterans from Galveston's black community, it also included twelve veterans of campaigns in Cuba and the Philippine Islands.[7]

The Annual Muster

Article 3347 of the Texas Militia Act of 1879 specified that "on the first day of October of each year, the Commanding Officer of each company of Volunteer Guards in this State shall cause to be made up and forwarded to the Adjutant-General a complete Muster Roll of his Company."[8] Company muster rolls list a wealth of information on the men who comprised such units, including the names, rank, date of enlistment or commission, occupation, nativity, and physical description, which included age, eye color, hair color, and complexion of each member. In addition to these company muster rolls, there were several field and staff rolls for the "Battalion, Colored Infantry" that documented the same individual information mentioned above. The three men who served as battalion commanding officers prior to 1900 had all previously served in the Lincoln or Excelsior Guards. Furthermore, men from San Antonio held the majority of the battalion staff positions during this period.[9]

Registered first on the company roll, the commanding officer is followed by his

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[7] Muster rolls, Hawley Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Hawley Guards).

[8] *Revised Statutes of Texas,* 480.

[9] Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry).

first and second lieutenants, five company sergeants, four corporals, and then the privates listed alphabetically. Unlike the United States Army, these T.V.G. officers were also African Americans, elected by the rank and file of the company. On occasion the roll listed other positions such as a flag bearer, mechanic, or musician, and sometimes recognized a secretary or honorary members. Unfortunately, the Adjutant General's Office accepted company muster rolls with only the name and rank "if filling in of the description and other data relating to members should cause unnecessary delay."[10] This acceptance of incomplete rosters probably contributed to the six muster rolls submitted by the Lincoln Guards that only contained the names and ranks of its members. Beginning in 1900, the company muster roll eliminated the detailed information provided in previous years. It now only required the names of those present, their rank, and enlistment information of date, city, and length of commitment.[11]

The various muster rolls contained in the Adjutant General's Office open a window into the identities and characteristics of each company's membership. For example, 291 different African American citizen soldiers comprised Galveston's black militia companies during the years 1881-1903 while San Antonio possessed a membership of 255. After the First Colored Infantry Regiment reorganized into the Battalion, Colored Infantry, both cities registered eleven additional men – two from

[10] Muster roll, "Notes," T.V.G., ibid.

[11] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards; Henry Ossian Flipper, Class of 1877, was the first of only three African Americans graduates from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York before 1900. All other black officers served as chaplains. See Jeremy Wayne James, "Alone in the Profession of Arms: America's First Three African American West Point Graduates" (master's thesis, Texas A&M University, 2007).

Galveston, nine from San Antonio – on the field and staff muster rolls (these eleven men served only as staff officers). Further participation, or interest, is documented on a few scattered registers noting an added seventy-two men from San Antonio and sixty-three in Galveston. These registers list the names of men who swore allegiance to the constitutions of the United States and the State of Texas as one of the prerequisites to form a militia company, but for some reason never gained recognition. Seven more African American citizen soldiers are annotated as enlisting in the U.S. Army on the 1899 muster roll of the Excelsior Guards, but were never listed before. The inconsistencies in recordkeeping and missing records during these years clearly demonstrate that both cities provided more men for service with the Texas Volunteer Guard than the 603 officially recorded names in the records of the Adjutant General's Office.[12]

Militia membership ebbed and flowed in each company over the years. In Galveston, the Hawley Guards listed forty-five members in 1901 and forty-three in 1902, but reached a peak of fifty-four in 1903. The Lincoln Guards contained thirty-nine members in 1881, which remained just below the average number of forty men in

[12] The muster rolls for the Grant Rifles, the Lincoln, Excelsior, and Hawley Guards are incomplete, with many years missing. Absent the rolls from its first two years following qualification, the Lincoln Guards reveal only members who served from 1881 to 1900 while the Hawley Guards only record its membership from 1901 and 1902. The Grant Rifles reveal only two years of its five year existence. In San Antonio, the Excelsior Guards begin its registration of membership in 1883 and continues to 1903. The Excelsior Guards are missing its 1885 roll; yet, its 1886 roll provides some evidence of membership from the year before by listing 1885 enlistment dates for twenty-seven men. The field and staff rolls for the battalion span the years 1887 to 1891, 1893, 1895, and 1897; Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; "Collective oaths," Galveston, Texas, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; "Collective oaths," San Antonio, Texas, ibid.; Jacob Lyons to W. H. Mabry, 23 June 1890, Adjutant General correspondence, Record Group 401, ibid.; Leon Woodall to W. H. Mabry, 15 August 1890, ibid.; John Howard to W. H. Mabry, 3 October 1891, ibid.; Amos Banks to W. H. Mabry, 1 February 1892, ibid.

the company for each year. The membership in 1883 and 1887 dropped to a low of twenty-eight men while in the year 1891 enrollment reached a membership high of sixty-six. Even with Carroll Cage and his Cadet Band consisting of thirteen men listed on this roll, the year 1891 still had the most actual militiamen in the Lincoln Guards at fifty-three.[13]

The membership of the Excelsior Guards peaked much later in its record of service. The company maintained an average of forty-one men per year, dropping to its low of twenty-seven with the Lincoln Guards in 1883. However, the Excelsior Guards reached its membership high of fifty-six in 1897 as the potential for war with Spain loomed. If this peak is compared to the complete picture in Galveston with the Lincoln Guards' forty-one members and the eighty men who volunteered for the war with Spain, then the level of patriotism of the African American citizens from both cities becomes clear.[14]

When the sheer numbers of African Americans citizen soldiers from each city are combined with each militiaman's length of service, the importance of militia membership becomes visible. Each company had to repeatedly overcome membership turnover just to maintain its organization. The ability of these units to survive as long as they did was a credit to not only the leadership of each company, but to the black community. Together, these factors firmly demonstrate the importance of militia membership to African Americans in Galveston and San Antonio.

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[13] Muster rolls, Hawley Guards; Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards.

[14] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards.

Required loosely to serve a minimum of three years, the average black citizen soldier served a little more than his basic enlistment, approximately 3 years; then again, this averaging clouds the overall service commitment by some and the lack of service by others. Using only the annual musters for the Lincoln Guards, since the muster rolls for both the Grant Rifles and Hawley Guards comprised only two years, there were 223 total men, including battalion officers who enlisted for service. Of this number only 120 completed their three year term, or 53.8 percent of those who served. In San Antonio, the Excelsior Guards' numbers disclose a much poorer record even when the men who enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1898 are eliminated from the calculations. While this company, and those in battalion staff positions, contributed 264 men for state service, only 99 men completed their basic enlistment, or 37.5 percent. The bulk of those from either city completing the minimum three year enlistment centers on those serving three to six years, 87 of the 120 in Galveston, and 73 of the 99 in San Antonio (see Table 1).[15]

TABLE 1. LENGTH OF SERVICE

Years	Excelsior Guards	Lincoln Guards
Less than 3	165	103
3	28	32
4 to 6	45	55
7 to 9	19	17
10 to 12	6	10
Over 12	1	6

[15] Muster rolls, Grant Rifles, Lincoln Guards, and Hawley Guards; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Record Group 401 contains only two muster rolls for each company even though the Grant Rifles existed from 1882 to 1885 and the Hawley Guards from 1900 to 1906.

At the opposite end of the service commitment were sixteen men serving *ten or more years* in the Lincoln Guards. Six men from the company served more than twelve years and this group was led Louis Taylor, a porter with Edward Webster & Son, cotton weighers and inspectors, and Charles Bates, a cotton screwman, who both completed seventeen years, and Amos Banks, a drayman, with sixteen.[16]

John F. Van Duzor led the Excelsior Guards in years of service. Van Duzor, who worked as a porter at the Southern Pacific depot, served over two years with the Coke Guards, commanded the Excelsior Guards, and held the positions as Adjutant and Quartermaster of the battalion during his career. He retired after fifteen years and seven months of "honorable and continuous service."[17] Closely following Van Duzor was Major Jacob Lyons, a janitor at the Bexar County courthouse, who completed fifteen years and William W. Warren, a porter, who served nine of his twelve years as a lieutenant in the company and appears to have been its last commanding officer. Five others followed Warren with eleven years of service in the Excelsior Guards.[18]

Other descriptive categories – age, eye color, and skin complexion – were apparently difficult for the officers or staff members to record. Some men appeared never to have aged or added more than a year to their age between muster rolls. The average age of those men serving in San Antonio was 25.9 years versus an average age

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[16] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards.

[17] Adjutant General, State of Texas, G.O. 128, November 5, 1896.

[18] Service record, Jacob Lyons, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; "Collective oaths," San Antonio, Texas, Record Group 401, ibid.; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Others include Richard T. Bell, Joseph Johns, Richard E. Lee, and Jackson Nicholson.

of 29.6 years old in Galveston. This slightly older age for the Lincoln Guards may explain why more men did not enlist with Company G, Ninth U.S. Volunteer Infantry on June 30, 1898. Those African American Galvestonians who enlisted for service in Cuba averaged 26.1 years of age, but several were over the age of forty. Of course, another possible contributing factor to explain the absence of other Lincoln Guardsmen on the roster might lie simply with the fact that they had worked hard to establish themselves in the community, they had families, or committed otherwise. Of the total number of men that mustered in with Company G, only 22 percent were married. In addition to age, J. L. Taylor, a schoolteacher, who served as the secretary of the company in 1881, wrote the word "Good" under the eyes category instead of the color of eyes that was the expected entry. Yet, neither of these problems, in regards to age or eye color, can compare with the complicated, multiple terms used by both companies to describe complexion.[19]

The procedure of documenting the color of a man's skin provides a unique opportunity to study how this practice was interpreted, or perhaps the struggle it involved. Absent any guidelines as to what clearly constituted each description, this entry remained completely up to the discretion of the member of the company who completed it (see Table 2).

Often the secretary, commanding officer, or other staff member, for the sake of expediency simply recorded all men under one category while others noted the different

[19] Muster-in roll, Company G, Ninth U.S.V.I., Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

shades of skin color. For example, in 1899 the Excelsior Guards had members who were "black," "brown," "yellow," or "mulatto"; yet, in the same year the Lincoln Guards simply marked all thirty-eight of its members as "colored." The lack of consistency with descriptions arose as the person who inscribed this information changed over the course

TABLE 2. MILITIAMEN'S COMPLEXION

Description	San Antonio	Galveston
Dark-skinned: dark, dark brown colored, black, or brown	220 (86.3%)	168 (70.8%)
Light-skinned: Yellow, bright, Light, or mulatto	35 (13.7%)	11 (4.6%)
Not listed, unknown	0	58 (24.6%)

of the company's existence. For example, during his nine-year career William Louis Toombs, of Galveston, was described as "dark" three years, "colored" for two, "bright" for one, "light" for one, and for two years his complexion went unrecorded.[20] Likewise, Joseph Johns of San Antonio, who served most of his eleven-year career as a sergeant or lieutenant, appeared to be "dark" two years, "brown" for another two years, "black" for three, "light" for one, "yellow" for one, and then listed as "mulatto" for his final two years. While these two men illustrate the most difficult examples in interpreting the color of a man's skin, most of the citizen soldiers remained consistent throughout their

[20] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards.

careers, and this information clearly exhibits that the overwhelming majority of the men, enlisted and officers, who served in both cities were darker skinned African Americans.[21]

Moreover, none of the eleven men who served as commanding officers of the two companies was ever listed as being light-skinned. This also held true at the battalion level, where *none* of its commanding officers possessed lighter complexions; however, 42.8 percent of the battalion staff officers received one of the light-skinned descriptions. Nevertheless, the darker skin composition of the officers from both cities contrasts sharply with what historian Lowell Dwight Black found in his study of Ohio's black militia units. In Ohio, the militia companies "were officered exclusively by mulattoes." Black contends that the "Negro elites" maintained a "rigid class distinction" social structure based upon skin hue.[22]

An examination of the militiamen's occupations (see Table 3) initially confirms the historically accepted conclusion that the men who comprised black militia were mostly simple laborers. Nevertheless, by using the 1900 U.S. Census occupation categories to examine the employment of every member for the years 1880 to 1904, it becomes possible to see a much more varied representation of workers and trends over the course of each company's existence. In both the Lincoln and Excelsior companies,

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[21] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; Part I, Population, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*: Part I, Population, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*.

[22] Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; Lowell Dwight Black, "The Negro Volunteer Militia Units of the Ohio National Guard, 1870-1954: The Struggle for Military Recognition and Equality in the State of Ohio" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1976), 183, 188. See also Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

most men were employed in “Domestic and Personal Service” throughout their history. This category included non-specified laborers, but also barbers, policemen, servants, and waiters. The largely vague group “Laborers (not specified)” dominated the initial years in San Antonio; however, this trend began to swing in 1892 towards an almost equal

TABLE 3. MILITIAMEN’S OCCUPATIONS

Category	Excelsior Guards	Lincoln Guards	1900 Texas (see note)
Agricultural pursuits	0.0%	0.0%	66.8%
Professional service	0.9%	1.0%	1.5%
Domestic & personal service (incl. police)	62.9%	48.1%	21.5%
Trade & transportation	25.5%	30.6%	6.3%
Manufacturing & mechanical pursuits	7.6%	2.4%	3.9%
Missing data	3.1%	17.9%	-

NOTE: Total Negro males ten years of age and over engaged in selected groups of age periods, and parentage, for the State of Texas.

number of laborers and waiters until this latter group of men finally outnumbered the laborers by the turn of the century. Recognizing that most members failed to remain beyond the standard three-year enlistment, this later membership seems to demonstrate a minor social shift of those joining the San Antonio militia in the latter stages of its existence. The militia companies in Galveston appear to have experienced a similar transition; however, the data remain obscured by the inability to analyze the occupational information of over one-hundred men of the Lincoln Guards. Therefore, the

Guards in Galveston may have been completely dominated by common laborers, with an estimated 66 percent of its members listed as laborers versus 39 percent in San Antonio. Other "Service" occupations included a small contingent of barbers in Galveston, but only one in San Antonio with an equal number of janitors in both companies.[23]

Following closely behind the "Service" category, those employed in the trade or transportation fields comprised the next largest group of militia members. The Excelsior Guards possessed almost twice the number of porters, and helpers in stores, than any other occupation in the trade and transportation field, followed by draymen, and teamsters. In Galveston, the situation was reversed. Draymen and teamsters led this labor category until 1892 when it, too, encountered a shift to an almost equal division of draymen, cotton screwmen, and porters. Both companies contained almost the same number of railroad workers, but only in San Antonio could one find militiamen employed with the Pullman Palace Car Company.

Only a few men fit into the occupation categories "Manufacturing & Mechanical Pursuits" and, surprisingly, "Professional Service" employed only a few men. The Excelsior Guards contained the only blacksmith, brick mason, machinist, and watch maker while Galveston's included the only baker. The higher percentage of manufacturing workers in San Antonio resulted when for many years the company had enrolled two to three cotton mill workers; nevertheless, the available information still places more skilled and semi-skilled workers in the militia at San Antonio than

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[23] Black, *The Negro Volunteer* Militia; Bruce A. Olson, "The Houston Light Guards: Elite Cohesion and Social Order in the New South" (PhD diss., University of Houston, 1989); *Twelfth Census: Special Reports Occupations, 1900* (Washington: GPO, 1904), 442-3.

Galveston. In regard to the "Professional Service" category, both cities, during a few years possessed a small group of teachers.

The occupations of the battalion staff officers mirrored these same trends exhibited by the companies. Initially listed as laborers, many of the officers soon moved into more specific jobs as porters or teamsters, but an exception occurred with the Professional Service" occupation category. Numbering roughly half the staff officers, the battalion always included a surgeon, a minister, and often, a newspaper editor.

The problems arising with each man's nativity occurs, not as a matter of attempting to decipher or interpret the correct information, but with the varying degree of its detail and inclusion. The Lincoln Guards simply failed to tabulate this information on the majority of its muster rolls and only one contained any evidence as to the birthplace of eleven of the thirty-seven men. When an entry was entered, it merely displayed the generic word "American." The Excelsior Guards, on the contrary, usually listed at a minimum the state that the militiaman hailed from. In 1898 and 1899 Captain Robert G. Ellis, who worked at the gas works, documented not only the state, but the city, or county, where each man was born. This analysis divulges detailed information on the men who served in San Antonio while the guardsmen from Galveston are obscured by poor recordkeeping. In an effort to alleviate this dilemma, census records were employed to identify the nativities of those men who served in the 1881 Lincoln

Guards and Grant Rifles muster roll and similarly the 1900 census for those in 1899 serving in both the Lincoln and Hawley Guards (see Table 4).[24]

TABLE 4. NATIVITY – GALVESTON MILITIA

State	1881	1900
Northeast:	2	1
Rhode Island, Pennsylvania		
Mid-Atlantic:	7	0
Virginia, District of Columbia		
Maryland		
Upper South:	5	2
Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri		
Southeast:	9	2
Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama		
S. Carolina, N. Carolina		
West:	0	1
California		
Trans-Mississippi:		
Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas	17	20
Foreign: Virgin Islands	0	1

Examining these data tell more about how far some of these men had traveled to their new communities. As Table 4 depicts, men from the Trans-Mississippi region dominated the membership rolls of the Lincoln Guards and Grant Rifles. Texas led all states with eight men in the two companies, including one of the Lincoln Guards' most prominent and active members, Henry P. Whittlesey, a local merchant. Louisiana, the birthplace of seven of seventeen from this region had the next highest number. Of these

[24] The muster rolls submitted to the Adjutant General beginning in 1900 did not require such detailed information to be submitted.

seven men, three held positions of responsibility in the companies, including a first sergeant and secretary. The first and last commanding officers of the Lincoln Guards, Thomas Bates, a drayman, and Louis Taylor, hailed from Kentucky.

Unfortunately, even extracting this information from the federal census some of the birthplaces of Galveston's citizen soldiers remain a mystery. Only 43 of the 75 men from the 1881 Grant Rifles and Lincoln Guards are found on the 1880 census, and likewise, only 27 of the 38 men from 1899 could be located on the 1900 census. With these deficiencies aside, the partial results obtained from this comparison can be contrasted with similar nativity information gathered from San Antonio on the Excelsior Guards in 1883 and 1899 (see Table 5).

TABLE 5. NATIVITY - EXCELSIOR GUARDS

State	1883	1899
Northeast: N. York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut	4	0
Mid-Atlantic: Virginia, Maryland	10	1
Upper South: Kentucky, Tennessee	8	
Southeast: Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama	8	2
West: Colorado	0	1
Trans-Mississippi: Texas, Louisiana	5	42

The most numerous group for the Excelsior Guards declared Maryland, more specifically Baltimore, as their birthplace. In fact, Baltimore could claim not only six of

the ten original members from the mid-Atlantic region, but also Major Jacob Lyons as native sons. Other battalion staff officers cited other urban areas as their nativity, including Thomas J. Dilwood, a janitor, from Boston and John F. Van Duzor from Albany, New York. After the state of Maryland, Kentucky contributed five followed by the Old Dominion and Alabama with four each.

Addresses and Employers

Many African Americans moved into urban areas following the demise of slavery in the South. As a result, the black population in both Galveston and San Antonio experienced rapid growth. Newly arrived families and individuals located in those areas of the city that offered affordable housing or they lived in close proximity to those who employed them. From 1860 to 1870, Galveston's black population increased from 1,180 to 3,007 while San Antonio's black community swelled from 592 to 1,957. As this growth occurred, the population of the political wards that comprised each city shifted racially, economically, socially, and sometimes politically. An assessment over time of the residential locations of the men who joined each respective militia company illustrates that men from one or two political wards made up the majority of each company. This characteristic remained consistent throughout the life of both organizations in San Antonio and Galveston.[25]

[25] *Ninth Census: The Statistics of the Population of the United States* (Washington: GPO, 1872), 270-1. The white population of Galveston grew from 6,127 in 1860 to 10,810 ten years later and in San Antonio, the white citizenry expanded from 7,643 in 1860 to 10,298 in 1870.

Only about 70 percent of the residential information for San Antonio's black citizen soldiers is available; yet, these results are fairly consistent with historian Kenneth Mason's study that illustrates where the majority of African Americans lived in the city.[26]

Table 6 illustrates that most of the Excelsior Guards resided in the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Wards from the years 1886 to 1904. The Sixth and Seventh Wards,

TABLE 6. PERCENTAGE MEMBERSHIP BY POLITICAL WARD – EXCELSIOR GUARDS

Ward	1887-88	1892-93	1897-98	1903-04
1	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2	7.1%	9.5%	0.0%	7.1%
3	14.3%	4.8%	10.2%	10.7%
4	0.0%	9.5%	8.2%	3.6%
5	14.3%	9.5%	20.4%	21.4%
6	35.7%	47.6%	28.6%	25.0%
7	14.3%	19.0%	24.5%	32.1%
8	7.1%	0.0%	8.2%	0.0%
(N)	14	21	49	28

commonly referred to as the Eastside, formed the center of black society in San Antonio; therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of the militia company's members concentrated there. These two wards witnessed militia weekly drills, ceremonial functions performed by the Guards, and even housed the company's armory. Situated on the corner of Chestnut and Crockett streets, this building was centrally located on the

[26] Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio*, 81-125.

city's Eastside (see Figure 1).

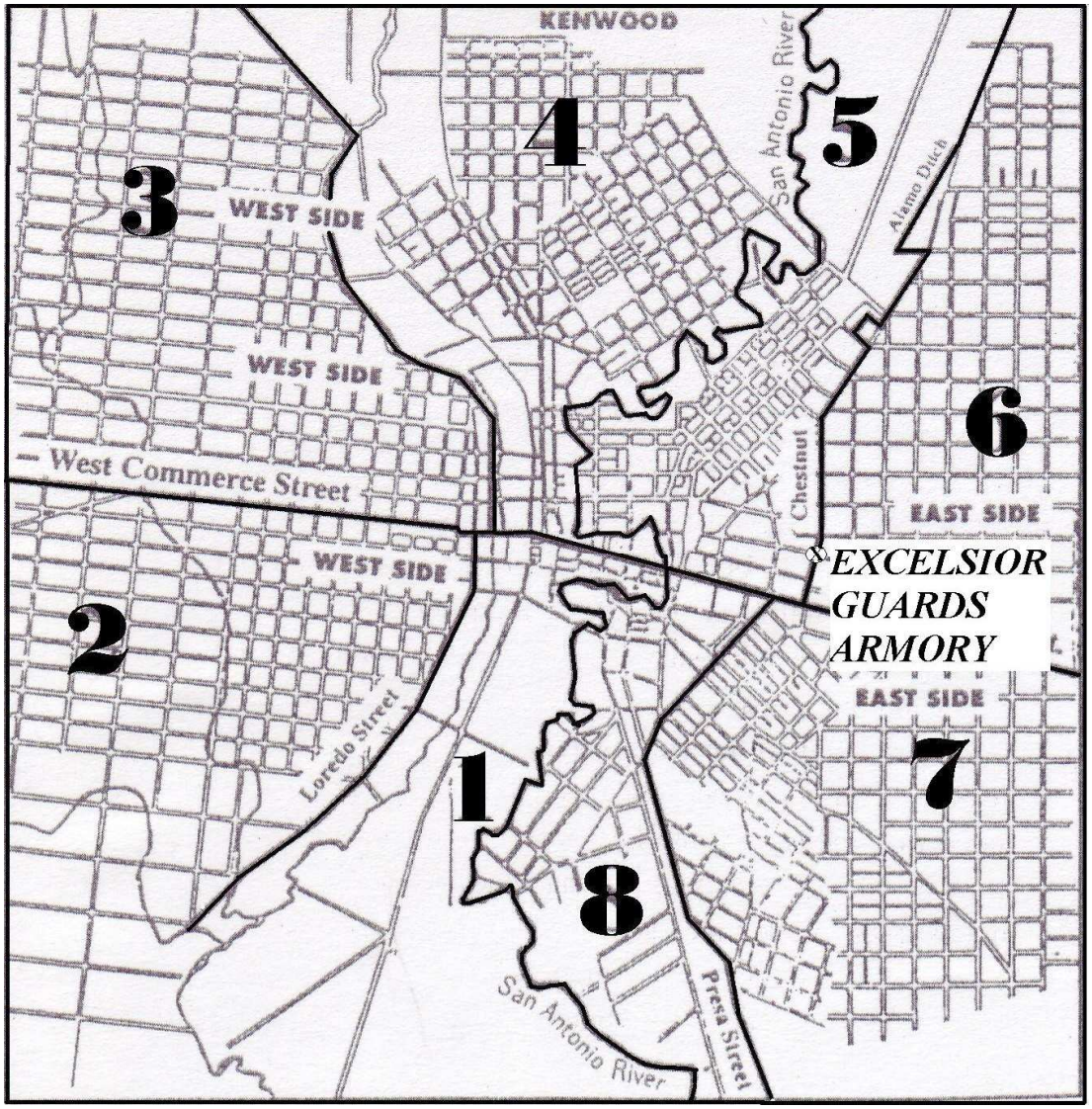

Figure 1. San Antonio Political Wards. Revised map *from Mason 1998.*

What is surprising, however, is the fact that these three political wards containing the largest percentage of militiamen were racially diverse neighborhoods. For example, in 1890 the Sixth Ward possessed a black male population of 17.7 percent of the total

male population in this neighborhood, and the Seventh Ward had 18.1 percent of the total ward population.[27]

The native white male population of the Sixth Ward consisted of 58.6 percent of the total with an additional 23.7 percent of foreign-born white males. The Seventh Ward experienced similar racial profile percentages with 57.5 percent native white males and 24.5 percent foreign-born white males. The Fifth Ward contained an even smaller ratio of African American males, 6.5 percent, versus the dominant white male population of 93.5 percent.[28]

By examining 77 percent of the black militiamen from Galveston, the resulting information illustrates both similarities and differences between the cities. Like San Antonio, Galveston was divided into numerous political wards, the membership in its black militia companies hailed predominately from two such wards, and even though in those two wards blacks accounted for almost half the population, they operated as the minority group. Yet, the Island City differed in that it was comprised of twelve total wards and the two which accounted for the majority of militiamen often changed over time (see Table 7).

Table 7 show how rates of black militia membership varied over time throughout the city's various political wards. During the first documented years of the Grant Rifles and the Lincoln Guards in the early 1880s most members lived in the city's Eighth Ward, followed closely by the Seventh just to the west. Immediately following the

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[27] *Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, Part I* (Washington: GPO, 1895), 556.

[28] Ibid.

dissolution of the Grant Rifles in 1885, there was a rise in members from the Seventh and Twelfth Wards, but by the 1890s the Eighth Ward solidified its hold on the majority of men who served in the black militia in Galveston. As in San Antonio the armory of the company was found in this ward, occupying the northeast corner of Avenue L and 28th Street (see Figure 2).[29]

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE MEMBERSHIP BY POLITICAL WARD – LINCOLN GUARDS

Ward	1882-83	1886-87	1891-92	1896-97
1	10.4%	14.9%	4.3%	16.7%
2	1.5%	4.3%	0.0%	13.3%
3	1.5%	6.4%	4.3%	3.3%
4	4.5%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%
5	7.5%	2.1%	14.9%	6.7%
6	9.0%	4.3%	0.0%	3.3%
7	19.4%	23.4%	12.8%	13.3%
8	29.9%	14.9%	34.0%	36.7%
9	1.5%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
10	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
11	4.5%	2.1%	4.3%	0.0%
12	9.0%	23.4%	21.3%	6.7%
(N)	67	47	47	30

The Seventh and Eighth Wards in Galveston overwhelmingly contained the largest African American male population in the city; in fact, the Eighth Ward was 47.1 percent African American male compared to 38.2 percent native white male and 14.7

[29] As of 2007, the football stadium for Ball High School occupies this location.

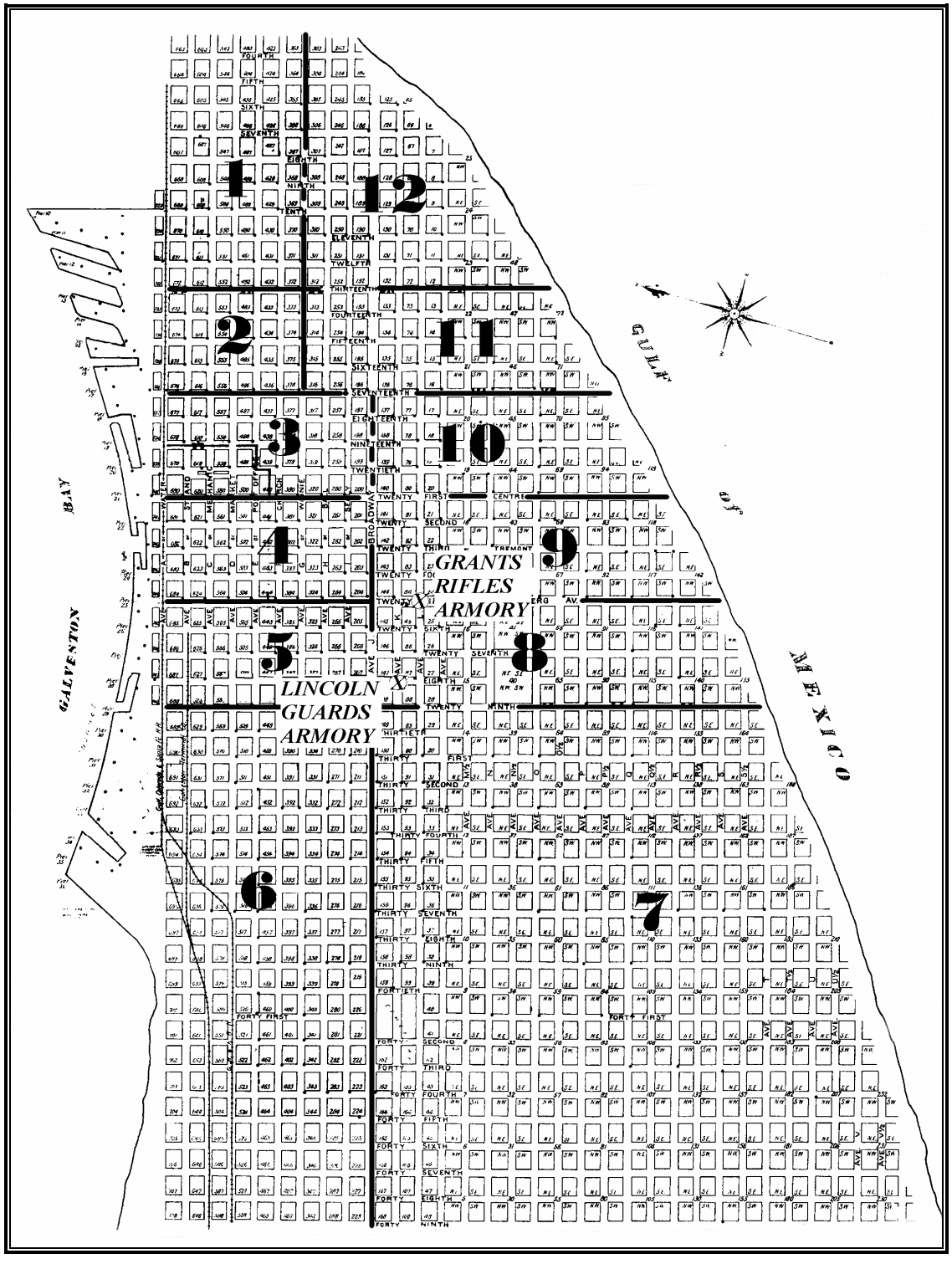

Figure 2. Galveston Political Wards. Revised map *from Morrison & Fourmy 1901.*

percent foreign-born white male. The Seventh Ward, while numerically containing more black males, only accounted for 29.1 percent of the overall ward population. The Twelfth Ward, however, possessed 40.8 percent black males to 46.4 percent native white males and 12.9 percent foreign-born white males.[30]

These data allow us to reach two conclusions. First, in San Antonio the black militiamen assembled, practiced, and lived in the midst of predominantly white neighborhoods; during the life of the organization, this never changed. Second, Galveston experienced a different phenomenon. The majority of its militiamen hailed from neighborhoods with almost equal percentages of white inhabitants.[31]

Just as important as the neighborhoods where African Americans militiamen lived and located their armories were the men, and women, who employed them. The employers represented a group of people in the community who allowed their black employees to participate in militia activities. Granted, the compilation of length of service illustrates that most men rarely served beyond their three year enlistment; yet, the sheer number of men who joined and those who continued to serve year after year demonstrates a degree of flexibility in the relationship between the employer and the black militiaman. Whether this relationship was based upon business interests in the black community, political support, a level of paternalism, or interest in these militiamen as individuals, it did exist. By researching who employed these men permits us to

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[30] *Eleventh Census: 1890, Part I*, 555.

[31] Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio*, 111.

identify who, and what groups exercised a level of tolerance towards African American militia membership.

The names of every employer of every black militiaman eluded the grasp of this study. Of the 603 men whose names are contained on the various sources in the Adjutant General's Office, only 310 could be linked to an employer, which includes 42 who were self-employed. This total excludes not only those militiamen who may have been self-employed laborers, but also those who listed occupations normally associated with an employer. When the self-employed are deleted, then the resulting 268 militiamen can be linked to a total of 319 different employers between the two cities. A brief examination of who these employers were and where they came from illuminates what organizations or individuals, for whatever reasons, tolerated membership of their black employees in the militia (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. NATIVITY OF THE EMPLOYERS OF BLACK MILITIAMEN

Where Born	San Antonio		Galveston	
	%	employers	%	employers
Foreign-born	43.6	41	34.9	22
Former Confederate States	38.3	36	44.5	28
Other U.S. States	18.1	17	20.6	13
Total	100	94	100	63
Missing data	-	93	-	69

The resulting percentages illustrate that while the majority of employers who hired black citizen soldiers in San Antonio were foreign-born, Galveston's employers in this category came from the former Confederate States. Of those who used black labor

born in the United States, nine were African Americans themselves, six in San Antonio and three in Galveston. Within the nativity category of foreign-born, Germans accounted for 70 percent in San Antonio, and 56 percent in Galveston, of the foreign-born employers who hired black militiamen. Native Texans led the way in the category of "Former Confederate States" while states from the North (versus the Upper South or Midwest) accounted for the majority in the category of "Other U.S. States." Research failed to locate the nativity of 162 employers; still, of these 116 were companies. The railroads in San Antonio accounted for 47 percent of company-type employment and in Galveston this number was 57 percent in the shipping industry, including wharf labor.[32]

Lastly, in light of the lack of longevity of service and the prominence of German employers, one might speculate that these employers were those who created this unstable militia participation. This is simply not true. Separating the men who served for four or more years from those who served less, the percentages remain almost the same with those reflected in Table 8 and between the two cities. Of the employers who hired black citizen soldiers who served four or more years in the Island City, 22 percent were foreign-born with 30 percent born in the United States. In San Antonio these percentages are almost identical – 20 percent foreign-born, 30 percent native citizens. The Germans again led all the foreign-born employers with 74 percent in Galveston and 63 percent in San Antonio who hired members of the black militia. Company-type

[32] See the General Directories of the city of Galveston from 1878-1902, and for San Antonio from 1879-1904 compiled and published during these years by John H. Heller, Jules A. Appler, Charles D. Morrison with Joseph V. Fourmy, and Benjamin F. Johnson with Almon Chapman; *Tenth Census*; *Twelfth Census*. The northern states are represented by Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, and Massachusetts.

employment dropped slightly in Galveston to 39 percent and for San Antonio it lowered to 21 percent. Still, there was a major difference in the percentages of railroad and shipping industry employers with this category. The employment percentage numbers actually increased for these employers of African American militiamen who served for four or more years. In San Antonio the railroads accounted for 57 percent of all company-type employment while the wharf labor in Galveston jumped to 83 percent. This last category – the railroad and shipping industry – provides evidence that the types of jobs allowing for economic stability, in turn, transformed into membership stability in the militia company.[33]

This compendium of statistical information identifies who from the African American community in the cities of Galveston and San Antonio participated in its militia companies. The average black citizen soldier was a dark-skinned man in his mid- to late twenties. He lived in a neighborhood that contained the armory where he met many of his fellow neighbors for weekly drill. It also suggests a relationship between economic stability and militia participation. Often beginning his employment as a laborer, he later moved into a less strenuous job as a waiter or porter. Length of militia service was often tied to civilian employment. He most likely worked for a person who had been born in Prussia or Bavaria, but if he could find employment with a company

[33] Ibid. In 1880 Galveston's foreign-born comprised 37.4% of the city's population. At the time in San Antonio this same group was 29.3%. Ten years later, Galveston's foreign-born population had dropped to 20.2% and, in San Antonio, to 22.6% of the total residents. By 1900 the census reported that Galveston's foreign-born population had dropped slightly to 20.1% and in San Antonio to 21.2%. The German-born population in Galveston County in 1870 consisted of roughly 49% of the total of all foreign-born while in Bexar County, the Germans numbered about 35% of the total non-native population.

that required a large workforce like the railroad or, in Galveston on the docks, he could contribute more time to his militia participation.

The socio-economic backgrounds of the black citizen soldiers in San Antonio and Galveston illustrate a level of solidarity within the black community of those cities. Moreover, the continued black militia presence in both cities demonstrates a level of racial tolerance in society for African Americans who displayed an element of their citizenship through military service. Despite high turnover of its militia membership, their leaders and others collectively placed enough importance on the militia company to maintain its existence for almost thirty years. The motivation to serve and the goals that the black citizen soldier hoped to accomplish as a member of the militia wait to be explored.

CHAPTER III

MARCHING ONWARD AND UPWARD

The purpose of militia membership for the African American citizen soldiers who marched towards the springs at San Pedro Park on September 24, 1890 only becomes visible by studying their activities within their respective communities. Mostly day laborers and dock workers, they paraded shoulder to shoulder with hotel waiters, draymen, porters, and others. Some had worshiped together; others had shared hard experiences in the dry deserts of west Texas as soldiers in the U.S. Army, and one was a medical doctor who had received his education in Nashville, Tennessee. Together these men shared both a common bond and a common aspiration. They shared the bond of experiencing racial discrimination in a segregated society, but to parade through the streets of San Antonio in full view of its citizenry, under arms and in uniform, these African American men demonstrated to everyone who witnessed the parade, or who read the newspaper, that they were no longer the property of others, they were citizens of the United States.

For African Americans the motivation surrounding participation in militia organizations centered on their recognition and expression of their full rights as citizens. The U.S. Constitution, in granting new political rights and freedoms to the former slaves, gave African Americans the same rights as guaranteed by earlier amendments to the Bill of Rights. Militia service exemplified these rights long denied them. Through direct elections, the rank and file elected their own leaders, which they were unable to do in

either church or education as these groups required formal training. The uniform, the ability to assemble, and to handle firearms illustrated their new status and embodied the definition of manhood. The militia also acted as an integral component of the collective self-improvement institutions that arose during slavery and rapidly expanded after emancipation that sought to raise the African American from the residual darkness of slavery into the enlightenment of self-improvement. In early American history, the citizen soldier had defined full citizenship, and this continued for African Americans following slavery. Attempting to improve their social status within both the black and dominant white society, service as a citizen soldier in the militia embodied for African Americans more clearly than any other activity the definition and outward display of citizenship.[1]

Six years earlier on the occasion of the nineteenth anniversary of the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation in the State of Texas, St. Paul's Methodist Church's Reverend Mack Henson, addressed the crowd gathered in celebration at San Pedro Springs. He proclaimed, "twenty-five years ago who could dream that negroes [*sic*] would ever be seen as we have seen them to-day marching through the streets of this superb city, the Alamo city of Davy Crockett renown and blessed memory to the

[1] Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, eds., *The New African American Urban History* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1996). The State of Texas subjected all able-bodied males, ages 18 to 45, and who were not exempt, regardless of race, to military service. The Volunteer Guards comprised those men who organized themselves into uniformed companies accepted by the Adjutant General. See John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections of the Military Struggle for American Independence,* rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

gateway to all the west of this great emporium, with eagles on their buttons, muskets on their shoulders and swords by their sides . . ..”[2]

Henson’s words echo those made twenty-one years earlier by Frederick Douglass, who declared: “once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States."[3] Henson intertwined his words of progress with descriptions of injustices still levied upon the black community and reminded those present that “we are in a position to achieve by peaceful means victories more lasting and renowned than any secured by cruel wars and bloody inquisitions or otherwise.”[4] This statement alludes to the continued success of the network of self-help organizations operated by members of the black community. The African American citizen soldiers from San Antonio and Galveston understood the value of and participated in many of these self-improvement institutions.

Community Leaders

One example of these self-help institutions includes the network of fraternal organizations that reached the height of their popularity in the late nineteenth century.

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[2] “Emancipation Day,” *San Antonio Daily Express,* June 20, 1884. “The Colored Encampment,” ibid., September 25, 1890.

[3] John W. Blassingame, ed., *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, 1855-1863,* vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 596.

[4] “Emancipation Day,” *San Antonio Daily Express,* June 20, 1884.

Often associated with a national organization, hundreds of these fraternal groups offered their members life insurance that provided funds for the funeral and burial of the member and supported his widow with a small monetary pension. Still others focused on savings and loan opportunities, enabling African American citizens to purchase homes or land, or to begin a small business. Sometimes these fraternal organizations simply dedicated themselves to benevolent activities in the community providing contributions of money and time to those in the community who needed it the most.[5]

The city of San Antonio possesses several cemeteries where members of the Excelsior Guards can be found with evidence of their fraternal membership. The graves of those who were affiliated with the St. Elmo Lodge No. 25, Knights of Pythias are identified with the initials "F C B" engraved inside an unbroken strand of three chain links symbolizing strength and unity. The militiamen who advocated the Pythias motto of "Friendship (F), Charity (C), and Benevolence (B)" included John F. Van Duzor, Oliver Jackson Carter, Levi Jackson, as well as Joseph, Isham, and Albert Washington. Carter served briefly as a private in the Guards before the Spanish-American War. As a young man he worked as a porter, clerk, and janitor. Carter later operated a successful mortuary in San Antonio's Eastside community. Nothing is known of Levi Jackson, who served as a private for three years. Albert Washington, a porter at the University Club on West Commerce, also joined the Guards prior to the war with Spain and served for approximately three years while Joseph Washington, a painter, served two years in

[5] Joe W. Trotter, "African American Fraternal Associations in American History: An Introduction," *Social Science History* 28:3 (Fall 2004): 355-66.

the early 1890s. Isham Washington, who worked as a laborer at the San Antonio Milling Company, initially enrolled in the company in 1886. He received a promotion to sergeant in 1893 and then to second lieutenant in 1896, his last year of service.[6]

Other militiamen, Anderson Bee, Joshua Bruce, Benjamin Wicks, and Willie Williams, all laborers, served as privates in the Excelsior Guards who chose instead to affiliate with the United Brothers of Friendship (Golden Rule), while still others, like Privates Rufus Walker, a teamster with Isreal Nunez's freight transfer line, and George Mitchell, a laborer who enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1898, associated with the Alamo Lodge No. 2142 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Lastly, the Masons, who associated with the Beacon Light Lodge No. 50, included two of the Guards' more prominent members, physician Greene Joseph Starnes and blacksmith Jesse Milton Bumbrey. No two citizen soldiers in San Antonio embodied the efforts of self-improvement more than these men.[7]

Starnes, born in Tennessee and educated at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, taught young black children at Indianola upon his arrival in Texas. Later he moved to Victoria County, Texas where he served as county clerk in 1880, reportedly the first African American to hold an elected office in that county. Arriving in San Antonio about 1882 he assisted in the formation of the Excelsior Guards and also acted

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[6] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards, Record Group 401, T.V.G., TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards); *East Side/Ellis Alley*, Beyond the Alamo Program (San Antonio: Office of Cultural Affairs, 2002), n.p. See the General Directories of the city of San Antonio from 1879-1904 compiled and published during these years by Jules A. Appler, Charles D. Morrison with Joseph V. Fourmy, and Benjamin F. Johnson with Almon Chapman (cited hereafter *Directories of San Antonio*).

[7] African American Genealogical and Historical Society of San Antonio, *Six Historical "Colored People's" Cemeteries in San Antonio, Texas: Headstones Readings and Index* (San Antonio: African American Genealogical and Historical Society of San Antonio, 1997), xxii, xxiv, 11-150.

as one of the company's sureties for its guaranty bond in 1892. Receiving his commission as a captain on Jacob Lyon's staff in 1887, Starnes served for six years as the battalion's surgeon. As a physician and surgeon Starnes maintained a thriving medical practice on the city's Eastside for years. He was active in the Lone Star Medical Association and submitted at least one article to *Daniel's Texas Medical Journal* in which he describes successful surgical procedures he performed in Memphis, Victoria, and San Antonio.[8]

Bumbrey, a native Texan, worked as a bartender in Jacob Lyons' saloon prior to his enlistment in 1897. Described as one of "several of our best young men," Bumbrey completed four years as a private with the Guards while his brothers, Louis, a private in the company for two years, and Robert, who served a year as a sergeant on the battalion staff, were also were members of the Excelsior Guards.[9] Bumbrey, with Carter and many others, participated in the boycott of San Antonio's streetcars in 1904 after the city government segregated its public transportation, and as members of the N.A.A.C.P. "supported solidarity efforts to defend the voting rights of African Americans."[10] Both Starnes and Bumbrey worked diligently in the development of local schools for black children and participated in local, state, and national politics in order to improve the

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[8] U. S. Bureau of the Census, Part I, Population, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*; Victoria County Genealogical Society, *The History and Heritage of Victoria County*, vol. 3 (Victoria: TX: Victoria County Genealogical Society, 2003), 32; Election roll, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; "Bonds," ibid., (cited hereafter "Bonds"); G. J. Starnes, "Tracheolorraphy," *Daniel's Texas Medical Journal* 8, no. 12 (June 1893): 489-95.

[9] "News Clippings," n.d., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry, T.V.G., ibid., (cited hereafter Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry).

[10] Kenneth Mason, *African Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1998), 217.

lives of their fellow African American citizens. Starnes maintained a presence and often spoke at the annual Emancipation Day celebrations and in 1900 Bumbrey acted as master of ceremonies for the event. Both men even held the position, at different times, of superintendent of the Sunday school at St. Paul's – one that Starnes occupied for more than twenty years. Each man provided vibrant leadership throughout their lives across a wide range of activities in service to San Antonio's black community.[11]

The African American community in Galveston also maintained a network of fraternal organizations. These "colored organizations" included a Masonic lodge, a Royal Arch Masonic chapter, two lodges of Odd Fellows, two lodges of United Brothers of Friendship, church societies, as well as business and labor groups, totaling one thousand and seventeen hundred persons. Unfortunately, the organizational records of these fraternal, church, and labor groups were lost to a major hurricane in 1900. Still, the two years of city directories that recorded these groups listed its officers and the participation of a few of the city's militiamen comes to light. Robert H. Perrine, a porter for David E. Schoolfield's and John T. McClanahan's drugstore, served as an officer of the United Brothers of Friendship or the Mysterious Ten, Lodge No. 7. Perrine initially enlisted in the Lincoln Guards in 1885 and throughout his nine year career held the rank of private, third sergeant, first sergeant, and completed one year as the company's

[11] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; *Directories of San Antonio*; "Emancipation Day," *San Antonio Light*, June 20, 1888; "Emancipation Day," *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 19, 1889; "Emancipation Day," *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 20, 1890; *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 17, 1891; "Emancipation Day," *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 21, 1892; "They Celebrate Today," *San Antonio Light*, June 19, 1893; "Freedom's Day Was Kept," *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 20, 1894; "Free for 35 Years," *San Antonio Daily Express*, June 19, 1900; St. Paul's Methodist Church, *St. Paul's 1944* (San Antonio: St. Paul's Methodist Church, 1944).

second lieutenant. Henry P. Whittlesey functioned as the treasurer of the Amity Lodge No. 4, Associated Free and Affiliated Masons when Norris Wright Cuney led the lodge as its Worshipful Master. Whittlesey and Cuney both worked at the U.S. Customs House, one as a messenger and the other as chief inspector of customs, a federally appointed position. Further discussion of Cuney's activities and service is found elsewhere in this chapter, but Whittlesey served primarily as an honorary member with the Lincoln Guards from 1881-1883, acted as a surety for Captain Elias Parker's guaranty bond in 1884, and for years managed the Sumner Cooperative, a grocery store supplying the black community. In 1893 Whittlesey worked as only one of three African Americans on the city police force and two years later became Galveston's first black detective, a position he held until his death in 1901. The only other person listed as an officer in one of these organizations and participated in the local militia company was J. L. Taylor. The schoolteacher who performed the duties as secretary of the Lincoln Guards in 1881 fulfilled the duties as an officer in the Union Protective Friendship Lodge, No. 2124 of the International Order of Odd Fellows. Clearly the extent of these early fraternal associations, in terms of members and different organizations available, illustrates ample opportunity in Galveston for men to associate themselves with these groups. The militia simply did not serve the same function. The purpose of militia membership, while sharing some common characteristics with these groups, such as elected leadership and a fraternal bond between men, extends beyond the secret practices of the lodge. Militia membership encompassed a greater principle for the African American men who served, one that men fought and died for. As a member

of the black militia, these men demonstrated their rights guaranteed as citizens, and for some, they hoped that their participation would increase their social standing not only in the black community, but in society as a whole.[12]

The end of the American Civil War produced an immense opportunity for the creation of African American religious and educational institutions. Missionaries and educators flowed into the South from the North to organize the former slaves and the church became the focal point of these efforts. The black church "was welcomed by the freedmen as one of the evidences of their freedom" and African American churches inspired the slogan, "we are rising."[13] Both Galveston and San Antonio established early congregations. Reedy Chapel of Galveston, established in 1848 as the Negro Methodist Episcopal Church South, reorganized in 1867 under the leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church. While Reedy Chapel operated at 2015 Broadway, a smaller congregation met at Shiloh A.M.E. located on the corner of Avenue M and 29th Street in the Eighth Ward. In addition to Reedy and Shiloh, by 1884 the Galveston city directory listed an additional five Baptist churches and two Methodist Episcopal churches. Ten years later a Catholic congregation and a Protestant Episcopal

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[12] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards); Morrison & Fourmy's *General Directory of the City of Galveston, 1882-83*, 101; Heller's *Galveston Directory, 1880-1881* (Galveston: John H. Heller, 1881), 184; Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards; "Bonds;" Linda McBee and Doug McBee, trans., *Records of interment in the city of Galveston, October 1900 to March 1910*, vol. 1 (Galveston: privately printed, 1994), 539. See also Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). See the General Directories of the city of Galveston from 1878-1902 compiled and published during these years by John H. Heller, or Charles D. Morrison with Joseph V. Fourmy(cited hereafter *Directories of Galveston*).

[13] Richard Robert Wright, Jr., comp., *Encyclopaedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Book Concern of the AME Church, 1947), 11.

church joined those already operating in the Island City. Unfortunately, as with the fraternal organizations, the absence of church records in Galveston prevents any study of the association between church leadership and that of the local militia company.[14]

San Antonio, however, provided a glimpse into the connection between church and militia participation. In 1867, several members of the Excelsior Guards helped found St. Paul's Methodist Church, including Solomon H. Evans, Willie Glover, James Heskins, Ulysses Mills, and Nathan Smith. Evans and Glover, both teamsters, served as privates for five years. Heskins worked as a coachman. Enlisting in 1897, he performed his duty as a private for two years and as the company's quartermaster sergeant for an additional two. Mills also enlisted in 1897, but later joined the U.S. Army. Finally, Smith, who worked as a laborer for the Aransas Pass Railroad, completed seven years as a member of the Excelsior Guards, holding the rank of private, corporal, and when the war with Spain approached, the company's third drill sergeant. St. Paul's developed as, and remains so today, the spiritual center of the city's Sixth Ward.[15]

In addition to these citizen soldiers and Greene Starnes mentioned earlier, three prominent religious leaders who exemplified the movement towards self-improvement served as members of the Excelsior Guards. One of the several battalion chaplains, D. S. Moten, a native of Texas, born November 5, 1865, initially joined the staff of Major Eugene Ogden Bowles in 1897 (see Figure 3). Educated at the Howard Institute, Paul Quinn College, Wilberforce University, and Payne Theological Seminary, where he

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[14] *Directories of Galveston.*

[15] *St. Paul's 1944*, 49.

served briefly as a tutor in Hebrew, Moten's ability to successfully engage "young people in religious matters" characterized his faith life.[16] This ability, according to his biographical sketch, "won marked regard outside of pastoral limitations, gaining for him high places of honor, among them: Conference Trustee of Wilberforce University; Member of the General Church Board of the Southern Christian Recorder; Secretary of the North East Texas Conference; and for more than six years the Chaplaincy of the Texas Volunteer Guard."[17]

Figure 3. Reverend D. S. Moten. *From Talbert 1906.*

[16] Horace Talbert, *The Sons of Allen: Together with a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Wilberforce University* (Xenia, OH: Aldine Press, 1906), 248.

[17] Ibid., 249.

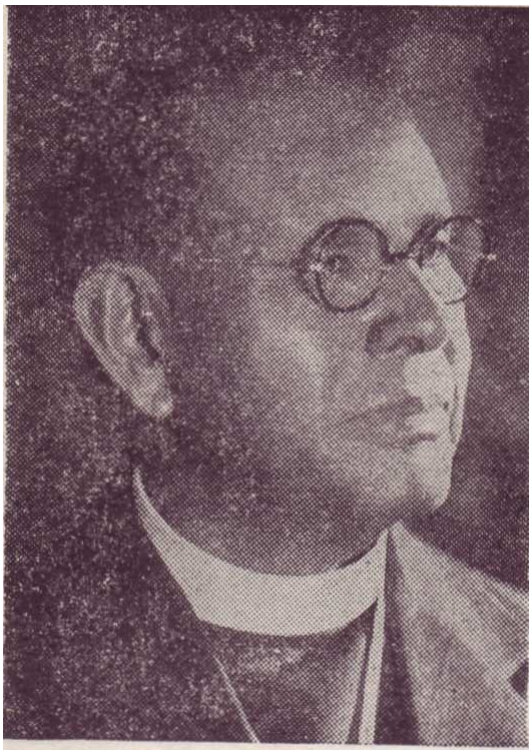

Figure 4. Robert Henry Harbert. *From Wright 1947.*

Another native Texan, Robert Henry Harbert (see Figure 4), born February 18, 1858 at Columbus, obtained his education at Wiley College in Marshall, and Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Harbert, licensed to preach the gospel in 1879, first enlisted as a private in the Excelsior Guards in 1892. At that time he worked as editor and business manager of the *Tonguelet*, a local newspaper with branch offices in Austin, Houston, and Galveston, that according to its letterhead claimed "with a large and growing circulation, it is the best medium to reach the Negroes of Texas."[18] Soon promoted to first lieutenant and elevated to the battalion staff as adjutant, Harbert also

[18] R. G. Ellis to W. H. Mabry, 6 September 1893, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

completed six years of service as a citizen soldier for the State of Texas. He later served as the pastor of churches in Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, and California and in 1928 formed Harbert Chapel, A.M.E. in Flagstaff, Arizona. Harbert, too, served as a trustee of Wilberforce University.[19]

Figure 5. Henry Allen Boyd. *From Lovett 1993.*

Lastly, Henry Allen Boyd (see Figure 5), the son of Robert Henry and Harriet Albertine Boyd, born April 15, 1876 in Grimes County, Texas, received his education in the public schools of Palestine, Texas where his father ministered to the West Union

[19] *Encyclopaedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, 130; Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; *Directories of San* Antonio; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards.

Baptist Church congregation. After the family moved to San Antonio, Boyd served briefly in the Excelsior Guards from 1897 to 1899 and held the rank of corporal and acted as the company clerk. Working hard to support the continuing education of family members, he obtained the position as head waiter at the Menger Hotel. Reportedly, his employer offered to send him to Harvard Law School, but this would have ended his financial support to his family so Boyd studied for and took the civil service examination, which later earned him a position as a postal clerk in the city post office. He later moved to Nashville, Tennessee to assist in his father's business ventures, the National Baptist Board (later known as the National Baptist Publishers Board, or N.B.P.B.) and the Citizens Saving Bank and Trust Company. During this time Boyd supported his father's philosophies that advocated cooperation between black and white Baptists in the South "to help solve the region's racial problems."[20] The elder Boyd believed "that the conservative southern white Baptist instead of the Yankee Baptists would prove better allies for a black publishing venture in the segregated and racially violent South."[21] Boyd organized the *Globe* newspaper to communicate to Nashville's black community the boycott against segregated streetcars in 1906, supported the effort to establish the Tennessee State Agricultural and Industrial Normal School for Negroes in the city in 1909, and in 1922 began his leadership of the local Republican Party, a post he maintained into the 1950s.[22]

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[20] Bobby L. Lovett, *A Black Man's Dream: The First 100 Years, Richard Henry Boyd and the National Baptist Publishing Board* (Jacksonville, FL: Mega Corporation, 1993), 26.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards.

Advocating the policies of Booker T. Washington, Boyd and his father "believed in uplifting the black race to a level of equality with white people." [23] Upon his father's death, Boyd assumed the helm of the N.B.P.B. where "everything is printed from calling cards to a Bible" and that "manufacture in their church supply department everything from a collection plate to the highest grade church pew and pulpit furniture."[24] Boyd remained active in civic, political, religious, and business affairs until his death in Nashville on May 28, 1959.[25]

While many churches functioned as the black community's first school buildings, the African American citizens of both Galveston and San Antonio worked hard to establish institutions of learning for their children. In Galveston, this effort to educate the young provided many opportunities for teachers of whom very few were citizen soldiers with the exception of J. L. Taylor, a teacher in the Lincoln Guards. Others who advocated education for the African American children in the city served as trustees on the various community schools. These leaders included not only Whittlesey, Van Buren Davis, and Thomas Bates, but also Louis Grant, a private who worked as a brakeman on the Galveston Houston & Henderson Railroad.[26]

The dedication of the new Brackenridge Colored School in 1901 illustrated the concerns of black leaders in San Antonio to elevate their social status through education.

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[23] Lovett, *A Black Man's Dream*, 153.

[24] Andrew Webster Jackson, *A Sure Foundation* (Houston: privately printed, 1939), 150.

[25] Lovett, *A Black Man's Dream*, 164, 179. At the time the NBPB's assets totaled $813,069.53. Today, known as RH Boyd Publishing, Incorporated, the leadership continues to reside in the Boyd family.

[26] *Directories of Galveston.*

Starnes spoke at this ceremony and Bumbrey delivered a resolution of thanks to "Colonel" George Washington Brackenridge for his generosity. The committee members who arranged the dedication ceremonies included Starnes, Thomas J. Dilwood, Henry O'Neal, Jr., and Dr. James T. Walton. O'Neal, a porter for the Fred Groos & Company of bankers, completed a basic enlistment with the Excelsior Guards as a private from 1897-1899.[27]

James T. Walton (see Figure 6) demonstrated his initial interest in the militia in 1890 when he, and other African Americans, joined with Leon S. Woodall to request the formation of a new company in San Antonio under Woodall's command. Although this request was denied, both men later held leadership positions in the Colored Battalion. Woodall, who had served two years previously as a private in the Excelsior Guards, accepted a lieutenant's commission in 1891 and served as the battalion's adjutant. Walton, born at Bryan, Texas in 1875, graduated from Meharry Medical College in 1896 specializing in obstetrics. Walton eventually received a captain's commission in 1897 and an appointment as the surgeon for the battalion. Following his militia service, Walton, known locally for his medical work with children's diseases, created the Walton Realty and Construction Company, the Walton Villa Development Company, served as vice-president of the Alamo Loan & Trust Company, treasurer of the Palace Drug Company, and as a trustee of the Colored People's Hospital. Providing not only invaluable medical services, he built over four hundred homes for families in the African

[27] "Colored School Dedication," *San Antonio Daily Express*, December 3, 1901; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards.

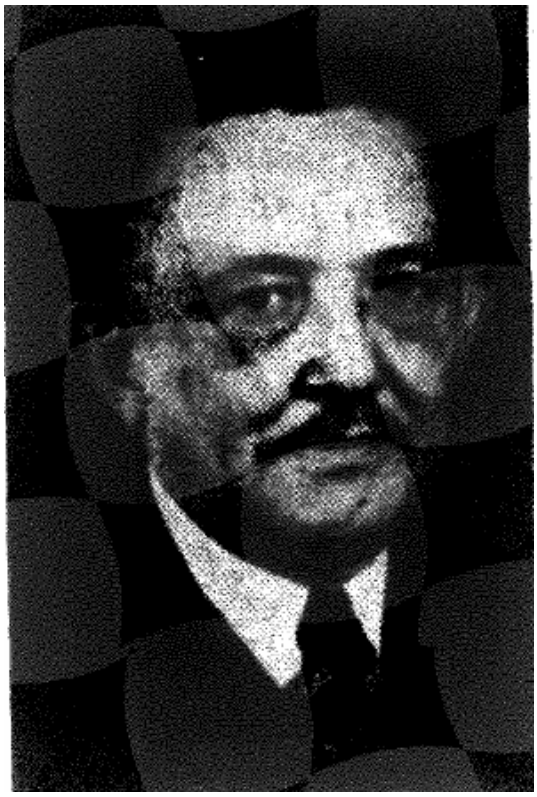

Figure 6. Dr. James T. Walton. *From San Antonio Daily Express 1950.*

American community on the easy payment plan. During Booker T. Washington's tour through Texas in 1911 the agenda for the leader of the Tuskegee Institute included a stop in San Antonio where he stayed at Walton's home. Speaking during a meeting with Washington and others, Walton complimented the African American leader by supporting his philosophy of ". . . counseling his people in the way of industry, enlightenment and morality, and in soliciting the aid and sympathy of the white man in his uplift movement."[28] Historian Kenneth Mason notes that Walton, too, participated in

[28] Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers, 1911-1912,* vol. 11 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 334.

San Antonio's streetcar boycott of 1906 with other members of the N.A.A.C.P.[29] Walton, also a member of St. Paul's, remained active in community and business affairs throughout his life and represented Bexar County as a national Republican delegate on several occasions.[30]

Historian Eric Foner contends that "if the goal of autonomy inspired blacks to withdraw from religious and social institutions controlled by whites and to attempt to work out their economic destinies for themselves, in the polity, 'freedom' meant inclusion rather than separation."[31] Springing from these roots during Reconstruction, Foner's interpretation continued to hold true during the post-Reconstruction period when these African American citizen soldiers served in Galveston and San Antonio. The majority of the political participation by the citizen soldiers of both cities occurred at the city, county, and for some at the state level.

In 1890 at San Antonio those selected as delegates to the Bexar Republican Party Convention included Greene J. Starnes, Jacob Lyons, Robert G. Ellis, Simon Turner and Ewing M. Dautchy. Turner, a native of Virginia, commanded the Excelsior Guards for six years from 1886 to 1891. After working as a driver for Joseph W. Hannig's furniture store and as a porter at the Maverick Bank, he operated a short-lived fruit store and ice

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[29] Mason, *African Americans,* 217.

[30] Frank Lincoln Mather, ed., *Who's Who of the Colored Race*, vol. 1 (1915; repr., Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1976), 275-6; Leon S. Woodall to W. H. Mabry, 5 September 1890, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Field and Staff Muster rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; Mason, *African Americans,* 217; "Dr. Walton Funeral Rites Pending," *San Antonio Daily Express,* October 10, 1950.

[31] Eic Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 110.

cream saloon on Alamo Plaza. Dautchy, a saloon porter, served two years as the quartermaster sergeant for the battalion. Another glimpse into the political leadership of Bexar County is permitted in 1895 when both Starnes and Dilwood were listed as members of the county executive committee. They shared this responsibility with other prominent Republicans from San Antonio who acted in many situations as the employers of many of the city's African American citizen soldiers.[32]

An additional characteristic shared by members of this political committee revolved around their support for arguably the most successful African American Republican Party politician in the State of Texas during the nineteenth century, Norris Wright Cuney of Galveston. Cuney (see Figure 7) first tasted politics as the sergeant-of-arms of the Twelfth Texas Legislature, receiving his appointment from the Republican Governor, Edmund J. Davis. Maneuvering amongst the white businessmen and politicians of Galveston, Cuney formed a political alliance with Roger Lawson Fulton, a Democrat, who defeated him in the race for city mayor in 1875. Forced to decide between his federally appointed position as chief inspector of customs and his elected position as city alderman from the Twelfth Ward in 1881, Cuney chose the alderman position where he stevedore on the Morgan Wharf where he initially employed hundred of black dock workers unloading ships. His success allowed him not only to break a

[32] "Republicans," *San Antonio Daily Light*, August 25, 1890; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; *Directories of San Antonio*; Field & Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; "Collector Cuney Talks," *San Antonio Daily Express*, September 7, 1895. The white Republicans on the committee included Ed Froebese who employed draymen, teamsters, and drivers for his freight transfer company, George G. Clifford, a medical doctor who later served as San Antonio's postmaster, lawyer Thad C. Bell who employed a citizen soldier as his coachman. Both Bell, Clifford, Starnes, and Dilwood were all Norris Wright Cuney supporters.

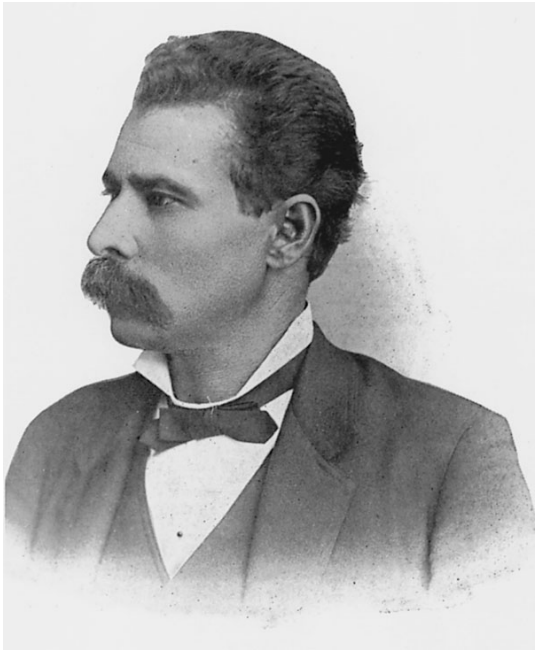

Figure 7. Norris Wright Cuney. *From the Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.*

strike on the Mallory Wharf, which employed white labor exclusively, but also to maintain employment of his black workers after the strike. Cuney later served again as city alderman in 1885 and a commissioner of the Galveston Water Works from 1887-1889. His position as national committeeman of the Republican Party for the state of Texas in 1886 allowed him to reach the pinnacle of his political career in 1889 when President Benjamin Harrison appointed him Collector of Customs for the port of Galveston. Cuney's activities in city government, positions of leadership in business, social and educational organizations in Galveston, and his participation at the head of the

Republican Party in Texas gave him the ability to work for the advancement of African Americans, not only in Galveston, but all across the state of Texas through the 1890s.[33]

Cuney's support for Galveston's black citizen soldiers first appeared in 1881 with his name recorded as an honorary member of the Grant Rifles. Serving as the guaranty bond of the company in 1881 and 1883, Cuney also served in this capacity for the Lincoln Guards in 1885, and his brother, Joseph, guaranteed the bond for the Guards in 1893. Following his appointment in 1887 as the commanding officer of the Battalion of Colored Infantry, Major Jacob Lyons recommended to the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for Cuney to serve as the quartermaster officer with the rank of captain and "by doing so we can retain the influence of men that will be a credit both to the State and their race and by so doing we hope to place the *colord* regiment upon a better *bases* than if ever was *sence* they was first granted the *priviledge* of bearing arms . . .."[34] Cuney failed to gain the appointment. Further evidence of Cuney's assistance appears within the occupations of the citizen soldiers themselves. Twenty-four of the men who served with the Lincoln Guards worked on the Mallory Wharf and an additional three on the Morgan Wharf. In addition to these laborers and cotton screwmen, the large number of draymen found within the ranks of the Guards may be attributed to Cuney's role on the Committee on Hospital and Health.[35]

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[33] Virginia Neal Hinze, "Norris Wright Cuney" (master's thesis, Rice University, May 1965).

[34] Jacob Lyons to W. H. Mabry, 16 February 1887, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[35] Maud Cuney-Hare, *Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribune of the Black People* (1913; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995); Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards; "Bonds."

While Cuney acted as the Republican Party's torchbearer, several other citizen soldiers from Galveston participated in local and county politics. Those who held positions as delegates from the various city wards, in addition to Davis and Whittlesey, included Jefferson E. Carrington, Amos Banks, Charles Bates, Wallace D. Seals, John Cooper, Alexander Lemons, Mitt Brantley, and Elias Parker. Cooper, a carpenter, enlisted as a private in the Lincoln Guards in 1886. He later accepted a promotion to sergeant and served for a total of four years. Lemons drove a dray for one of Galveston's leading wholesale grocers and completed eight years as a citizen soldier, all as a sergeant. Both Brantley and Parker commanded the Guards during their militia careers. Brantley, also a drayman, served as a private, corporal, and sergeant before gaining the reins as the captain in 1885. His nine year career included five years at the helm. Parker, who worked on the Mallory Wharf, fulfilled the duties as an officer throughout his six year career, five as the company's first lieutenant and one as its commanding officer in 1884. Whittlesey served as the chairman of the Galveston County Executive Committee of the Republican Party for several years and carried out the duties as a delegate at the Republican state convention on more than one occasion.[36]

Progressing beyond the network of community self-help organizations and pursuing motivations further, the general lack of longevity of membership noted previously quickly establishes the fact that service as a citizen soldier produced no economic benefit for most militiamen. The contrary held as the general rule, as outlined

[36] Norris Wright Cuney, *Large scrap book of newspaper clippings of N. W. Cuney Scrapbook* (Houston: Southern Microfilm Corporation, 1964). Microfilm at Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas.

by the Adjutant General in his biennial report of 1904 stating that "almost without exception, companies are confronted with the difficulty of raising funds to meet their necessary expenses, such as armory rent, lights, fuel, and the cleaning and repair of uniforms and equipment."[37] The Adjutant General acknowledged that membership in the militia contributed to the economic hardships of each member's daily experience, and this statement proved even truer for those who occupied the lower rung of society's economic ladder. Furthermore, to increase the intensity of this financial crisis, the Adjutant General recognized that "about the time the company reaches a state of efficiency the officers find that it is impossible to rely on such donations, and the result is that such expenses must be borne by them or the company disbanded."[38]

With this financial challenge, the perseverance of those who remained beyond their initial enlistment illustrates a level of commitment, and especially by those guardsmen who served ten or more years, to something quite significant to them. Most of the Excelsior Guards found within this elite category never experienced any elevation in economic status. One-time commanders, Richard E. Lee and William Warren, who between them accounted for twenty-three years of service, worked as laborers, sometimes as waiters, drivers, or porters during their militia careers. Joseph Johns, who spent the majority of his time in the company as its first sergeant or lieutenant, worked throughout his twelve year militia career as a simple laborer. And eleven-year veteran Jackson Nicholson who worked his way up in the militia company from a private to its

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[37] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for the years 1903 and 1904* (Austin: Von Boeckmann, Schutze, State Printers, 1904), 17-8.

[38] Ibid.

first sergeant in 1898, worked as a packer for Newton and Weller for seven of those years.[39]

The few men in San Antonio that appear to have improved their economic status participated in a wide range of other community activities. This financial progress appears to have been attributed more to their political actions than their militia involvement. Ellis, who commanded the company for six of his ten years, worked as a laborer at the San Antonio gas works when he began his militia career. After obtaining the position as a pipe fitter, he became a city policeman in 1897, and eventually left the militia to accept a position with the U.S. Customs House at Eagle Pass, Texas. Thomas J. Dilwood, who served briefly as a battalion staff officer, worked as a simple laborer, but later held the position as superintendent of janitors at the San Antonio post office. Both Ellis and Dilwood obviously possessed leadership abilities, which may have greatly contributed to their economic elevation. Samuel Abram worked as a janitor for Dilwood at the post office when he joined the Excelsiors, but two years later began delivering the mail. It is unlikely that Abram capitalized on his militia service since he was dismissed during the second year of his enlistment and that incident occurred a year prior to his job as a mail carrier.[40]

In Galveston, this transition into more profitable or stable employment also occurred; however, by examining a few examples, they disclose that militia membership

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[39] *Directories of San Antonio.*

[40] Ibid.; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Field and Staff rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; Service Record, R. G. Ellis, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; Pension record file no. 13607, John A. Howard, Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration (cited hereafter NARA), Washington, DC.

failed to serve as the criteria for this movement. Jefferson E. Carrington, a private who worked initially as a dock laborer, later obtained employment as a night inspector for the U.S. Customs, and likewise, Charles Bates, Richard Bell, Todd Hewitt, Washington Jones, and William Porter, all dock workers, moved from that position as laborer to the more prestigious, and profitable, one of a cotton screwman. Of the five African Americans who worked at the customs inspector's office, and another six at the U.S. Customs House during Carrington's tenure, he remained the only man to serve in the Lincoln Guards. Similarly, the screwmen, who worked the gangs onboard the freight ships that literally "screwed" the cotton to compress it further to maximize loading, comprised hundreds of African Americans, yet only a handful served in the Texas Volunteer Guard. Since militia membership did not create these opportunities nor did every person in these same occupations participate as citizen soldiers, the movement towards more secure employment cannot be attributed to service as citizen soldiers in either San Antonio or Galveston.[41]

Army Veterans

Historian Leon F. Litwack, studying the work of W. E. B. DuBois, concludes that DuBois was convinced that nothing else "had made emancipation or black citizenship conceivable but the record of the black soldier."[42] San Antonio served as the headquarters for the U.S. Army's Department of Texas and members of the four black

[41] *Directories of Galveston.*

[42] Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 102.

regiments, the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry, and the Ninth and Tenth U.S. Cavalry, occupied some of the frontier forts in the western portion of the state. As some soldiers' enlistments ended, San Antonio became the home for a few of these veterans, and likewise, following the War with Spain, others remained in Galveston after their military experiences. Many of these African American veterans found their way into the local militia companies as citizen soldiers.

Studying black regular army troops from 1866 to 1898, historians William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips cite several motivations to serve, including misfortune, boredom, restlessness, unemployment, the ability to obtain an education, medical benefits, or an honorable discharge for use later as a character reference to acquire a federal job. Service in the Regular Army also offered such simple things as consistent meals and pay, as well as a roof over one's head, but none of these motivations apply to service in the state militia. No state militiamen received payment for their service; in fact, service in the state guards carried a substantial burden to its members. If these citizen soldiers were fortunate, all they could hope for centered on the use of an old rifle and the ability to wear a uniform. For African Americans service in the Regular Army provided them with their first real sense of what it meant to be a citizen of the United States, and by eliminating all other motivations, is the primary motivation for those who became citizen soldiers. These veterans continued this experience at the local level,

gained respectability and recognition in the local community as members of the militia, and arguably contributed towards the social uplift of those who served with them.[43]

Of the three men who commanded the Battalion of Colored Infantry, Jacob Lyons and Eugene O. Bowles of San Antonio, and George W. Wilson of Galveston, two had previously served in the U.S. Army. Lyons, a veteran of both the Civil War as a member of Company I of the Second U.S.C.I. Regiment, and the Indian Wars with Company F of the Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry, completed ten years of federal service. Bowles served as a private with Company E of the Twenty-fourth U.S. Infantry. Wilson may also have served, but his record remains elusive. Having acquired some level of military skill and experience, several Regular Army veterans held positions on the staff of these commanding officers.[44]

Some of the most visible T.V.G. staff members with Regular Army experience included battalion adjutant and quartermaster John F. Van Duzor. Van Duzor enlisted for five years on February 15, 1872 at Albany, New York as a private in Company B of the Twenty-fourth U.S. Infantry. Promoted to corporal in 1876, Van Duzor left the army as a sergeant from Fort Duncan, Texas with an excellent character rating. After his retirement from the Texas Volunteer Guard, he found employment as a notary public. Ambrose Simpson and John A. Howard each served as the battalion's sergeant major during their careers as citizen soldiers. Simpson, a native of Virginia who originally

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[43] William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 46-7.

[44] Service Record, Jacob Lyons, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1901-1902* (Austin: Von Boekmann, Schutze & Co., 1902), 200.

enlisted in the Tenth U.S. Cavalry in 1873, reenlisted five years later at Fort Concho, Texas as a private in Company A of the Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry. Receiving promotions to corporal and sergeant, Simpson's discharge noted that he was "a good soldier and an excellent man."[45] Simpson held the position as battalion sergeant major for two years and later worked as a porter for the Illinois & Great Northern Railroad. Howard, born August 12, 1849 at Baltimore, Maryland, enlisted in Troop K of the Tenth U.S. Cavalry on September 1, 1867. Reenlisting at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory five years later, Howard served as the trumpeter for Troop B. On May 28, 1877 Sergeant Howard received his discharge after ten years of faithful service and had participated in actions against the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Chickasaw. He completed four years as a private, corporal, and first lieutenant in the Excelsior Guards, and an additional two years as the battalion's sergeant major. Dilwood, a fellow trooper with Howard in the Tenth U.S. Cavalry, first enlisted at Boston, Massachusetts on February 4, 1868. He, too, completed ten years of service, achieving the rank of corporal. Dilwood also served as the orderly to Lieutenant John Bigelow and relayed to the young officer his opinion of the army's Schofield Smith & Wesson model 1875 revolver. Bigelow noted in his diary, "my orderly Pvt Dillwood tells me that a Schofield Smith & Wesson is nothing but a pop gun, that no long range strikes can strike because the muzzle goes up every time it is emptied. He told me that he was once chasing an Indian at close range, firing from his Schofield Smith & Wesson one shot after another until he had to

[45] Muster rolls, Company A, Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry, Record Group 94, NARA, Washington, DC; Virgil D. White, trans., *Index to Pension Applications for Indian Wars Service Between 1817 and 1898* (Waynesboro, TN: National Historical Publishing Co., 1997), 765.

give it up. He brought up his carbine and brought the Indian down."[46] As a citizen soldier Dilwood completed all three of his years of service as a first lieutenant on the battalion staff. He and Howard established a lifelong friendship during their service together, which included working with each another as janitors in the San Antonio post office. Serving on Lyons' staff in 1891, Nelson Smith and James Manuel both spent some time in the U.S. Army. Smith enlisted in Troop F of the Ninth U.S. Cavalry at Baton Rouge on August 27, 1866 and obtained his discharge at Fort Clark, Texas in 1871. Manuel completed only three years, serving in the Thirty-ninth U. S. Infantry from 1866 to 1869. Smith finished four years with the Excelsior Guards prior to his position for a year as the battalion's hospital steward. As one of the organizers of the company in 1882, Manuel also only spent one year on battalion staff as the quartermaster sergeant, but fulfilled seven years as a citizen soldier with the Guards.[47]

Other U.S. Army veterans can be found as officers and enlisted men in each company, including Excelsior Guards Captain Simon Turner and Captain Lewis Taylor of the Lincoln Guards. Turner spent ten years in the Tenth U. S. Cavalry before he obtained the captaincy of the Guards, a position he held for six years. Taylor, another Civil War veteran who served with the Fifth Kentucky Infantry from 1863 to 1865, enlisted two years after the war in the Ninth U.S. Cavalry and completed a five year

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[46] Marcos E. Kinevan, *Frontier Cavalryman: Lieutenant John Bigelow with the Buffalo Soldiers in Texas* (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1998), 61.

[47] Muster rolls, Company B, Twenty-fourth U.S. Infantry, Record Group 94, NARA, Washington, DC; Van Duzor's notary seal can be found on numerous service records of the members of the Excelsior Guards located at TSA, Austin. Field and Staff Rolls, Battalion Colored Infantry; *Directories of San Antonio*; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards; Pension record of John A. Howard, SA-13607, Record Group 94, ibid.; *Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914*, vol. 68 (Washington: GPO, 1956), 56; Muster rolls, Ninth U.S. Cavalry, Record Group 94, ibid.; *Index to Pension Applications*, 548.

enlistment. Working his way through the ranks of the Lincoln Guards, Taylor held the rank of private, corporal, and sergeant, served five years as a lieutenant, and then eight years as the captain of the company. Each unit possessed a few veterans as well, including William Maddox and William Anderson with the Lincoln Guards who served as infantrymen with the Twenty-fourth U.S. Infantry. These two citizen soldiers contributed ten years of service between them to the Texas Volunteer Guard. In San Antonio, those identified as veterans include original members Henry Thompson, Thomas Jones, and John Woodruff of the Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry, Charles Green of the Tenth U.S. Cavalry, and George W. Young of the Ninth U.S. Cavalry. As a cavalryman Green participated in the "pursuit of Geronimo's band of hostiles from May 18 to June 18, 1885."[48] Most of these men served only one year in the Excelsior Guards, but Jones and Green completed eight years. William H. Williams, another original member of the company and a native of Maryland, spent two years as the unit's second lieutenant and second sergeant prior to his elevation to battalion sergeant major. Dismissed from the service on October 15, 1889 on account of drunkenness, Williams had previously completed ten years with the Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry. Known as both Williams and William Rideout during his service, he represents the difficulty of identifying other veterans who may have changed their names. Williams returned to the militia company in 1895, but only served a year.[49]

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[48] Pension record file no. 11872, widow Sarah, Charles Green, Record Group 94, NARA, Washington, DC.

[49] *Index to Pension Applications*, 858, 932; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1899-1900* (Austin: Von Boekmann, Schutze & Co., 1900), 202; Muster Rolls, Lincoln Guards; Muster Rolls, Excelsior Guards; Field and Staff rolls, Colored Battalion.; Muster rolls, Troop H, Ninth U.S. Cavalry,

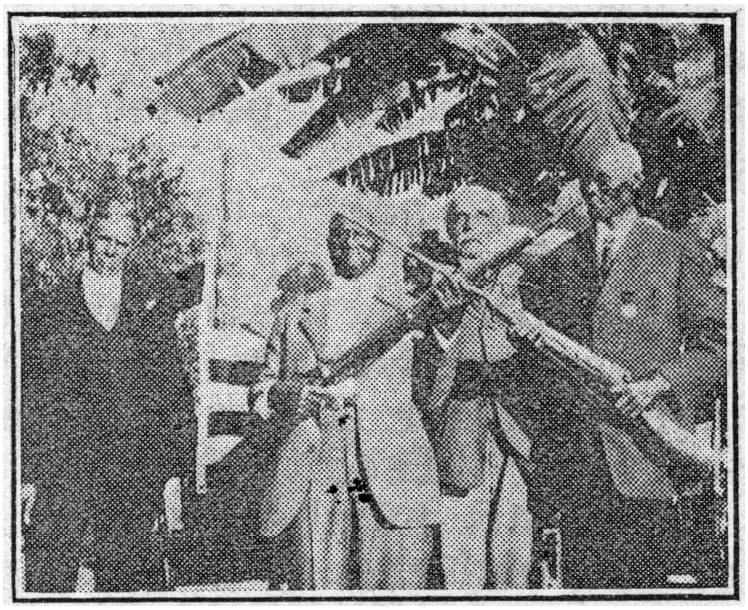

Figure 8. Members of Abraham Lincoln Camp No. 30, National Indian War Veterans. Identified from left to right: Abraham Matthews, Robert Keen, Thomas Dilwood, and William Williams. *From Webb 1932.*

Even after their militia service both Williams and Dilwood advocated the principles of citizenship embodied in military service. Chartering the Abraham Lincoln Camp No. 30, National Indian War Veterans on October 14, 1929, the members present elected Dilwood to serve as the camp's first commander and Williams its first junior vice commander. This national organization struggled to obtain pensions for U.S. Army veterans beyond those who only received them for specific military actions against Native Americans. They reasoned that if Civil War veterans could collect pensions for simply serving in the army during the years that the war occurred then this

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Record Group 94, NARA, Washington, DC; Muster rolls, Company E, Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry, ibid.; Muster rolls, Company I, Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry, ibid.

same policy should apply to those who served throughout the West, reasoning the U.S. government failed to agree with. In a photo (see Figure 8) taken three years later, both Dilwood and Williams are shown with one of the symbols of American citizenship embodied through military service – the rifle.

Figure 9. Second Lieutenant Wallace D. Seals. *From Coston 1899.*

In Galveston, the record of former military service for the Lincoln Guards remains obscure until the War with Spain. Enlisting in 1898, two of the Guards, Burnett Mapson and Wallace D. Seals (see Figure 9) served with Company G, Ninth U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment (U.S.V.I.) during the war. This company, known as the Hawley Guards, replaced the Lincoln Guards in the Battalion of Colored Infantry

following the end of the war. Its post-war muster rolls depict several veterans who experienced combat in Cuba and some who continued their service in the Philippine Islands.[50]

Wallace D. Seals, born in Cherokee County, Texas on December 5, 1862, soon relocated as a young child with his family to the city of Galveston. He first enlisted in the Lincoln Guards in 1884 and during his nine-year career as a citizen soldier achieved the rank of lieutenant. Recognized for his proficiency in drill, only the demands of his employer prevented him from commanding the company. As a volunteer, Seals received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Hawley Guards and spent eight months in Cuba.[51]

Upon their return to the United States, command of the Hawley Guards went to Tony A. Smith, originally from Richmond, Texas, who unsuccessfully attempted to form a local African American militia company in that city in 1895. Smith served as a sergeant in Seals' infantry company during the war with Spain. Returning to Galveston in 1899, Smith worked as a cotton screwman and led the Guards until they disbanded. Smith's lieutenants, Dennis Brantley, Henry McCastle, and William McPherson, all served with him and Seals in Cuba. Following his discharge and prior to returning to Galveston, McPherson reenlisted in the Forty-ninth U.S.V.I. and continued his military service in the Philippines. McPherson, Adam Grays, and Madison Foreman appear to be

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[50] Muster rolls, Hawley Guards, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Hawley Guards).

[51] William Hilary Coston, *The Spanish-American War Volunteer: Ninth United States Volunteer Infantry Roster, and Muster, Biographies, Cuban Sketches* (Middletown, PA: privately published, 1899); Muster-in roll, Company G, Ninth U.S.V.I., Record Group 94, NARA, Washington, DC.

the only Hawley Guards to have served in the islands. While Foreman only served as a private in the Guards, Grays acted as the company's first sergeant. Other guardsmen who served with Smith in Cuba included Hawley Guards Corporal Fred Manning, and Privates John McIntyre, Solomon Lewis, and William Williams. Lastly, Lincoln Guards Sergeant Shelton Banks and Private Solomon Gordon experienced Cuba as members of Company I, Ninth U.S.V.I. Regiment. These veterans formed the leadership core of the Hawley Guards over the course of its existence and led those African American citizens who joined them in ceremonial duties, celebratory parades, and military activities within the black community of Galveston.[52]

The African American militia companies that organized within these cities symbolized their status as full citizens. Continuing the tradition of the citizen soldier, these black men, through their actions, sought respectability, to display their manhood, and thus, to assert their rights. Organizing together in fraternal groups, building schools, participating in political parties, and worshiping in the churches that they themselves had developed, the citizen soldiers in the black communities of Galveston and San Antonio sought to raise the members of their race onward and upward towards social equality. While the men who joined the ranks of the local militia did indeed share a common fraternal bond within a military-style setting, none appeared to have achieved any economic gain through their membership. And, while prior service in the U.S. Army helped many of these veterans to obtain leadership positions, others reached the officer

[52] Tony A. Smith to W. H. Mabry, 12 May 1895, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; *Directories of Galveston*; Muster rolls, Hawley Guards.

ranks without any such previous experience. Clearly, these African American citizen soldiers desired to demonstrate to the society that surrounded them, even though segregated, that they too were citizens of the United States. Their activities in the Texas Volunteer Guard will further support this conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

"IN THE ARMOR OF MARS"[1]

The African American citizen soldiers of the First Battalion of Colored Infantry began their training the day immediately following the grand street parade that opened the annual colored militia encampment in San Antonio on September 24, 1890. After the conclusion of company and battalion drill that morning "the men were instructed in guard mounting and police duty" and upon the completion of the noon meal, all the battalion's commissioned officers "met in the headquarters tent for instruction in tactics, rules and discipline."[2] The *San Antonio Daily Express,* characterizing the black soldier as "peaceably disposed, though at the same time a man of war," praised the conduct of the African American militiamen and predicted that their behavior "will greatly strengthen the already high opinion entertained by the public of the colored volunteers of Texas."[3] Refuting later assertions that black militia companies were mere social clubs or fraternities, the African American men who served in the militia companies of the Texas Volunteer Guard definitely considered themselves citizen soldiers. Whether they assembled for weekly drill, marched in a grand parade, performed military movements for the general public or prepared for emergency duty under the auspices of U.S. Army and state officers, these men maintained their military organizations as set forth in the

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[1] This quote headlined the article in the *San Antonio Daily Express* on August 25, 1890 that discussed the military activities of the Battalion of Colored Infantry while attending their camp of instruction in the city.

[2] "The Volunteer Guard," *San Antonio Daily Express,* August 26, 1890.

[3] Ibid.; "In the Armor of Mars," *San Antonio Daily Express,* August 25, 1890.

legal statutes of the State of Texas. Within an even larger context these same actions support much more. They sought to expand their social status in hopes of obtaining social equality. These African American men also desired to exhibit their citizenship through their actions as citizen soldiers. In addition to this display, they utilized their actions as militiamen in an effort to preserve their eroding legal rights as citizens of the nation.

When the Sixteenth Legislature of the State of Texas revised the militia law in 1879 it included no recognition or legal separation of the races. In his annual report for 1889-90, Adjutant General Woodford H. Mabry remarked, "under the letter of the Militia Law of this State no distinction is made between the white and black races as to the liability to military service, or as to the privilege of obtaining recognition under certain circumstances in the Volunteer Militia . . . ."[4] Several years later during the annual encampment for the Colored Battalion in 1893 a reporter from the *San Antonio Daily Express* asked "if anything in the conduct or character of the colored officers" had led to the Adjutant General's statement that he "intended to exact a much more strict examination before issuing commissions to officers," to which Mabry replied, "not at all."[5] Speaking on the first day of the encampment, the Adjutant General commented that "I have found these creditable soldiers and I have told their officers that I hoped to see every one of them back at encampment a year hence, I suppose it is so that numbers

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[4] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1889-1890* (Austin: Henry Hutchings, State Printer, 1890), 18. The revised statutes of the Texas Militia Law, in 1887 and 1895, also failed to note any legal separation of the races.

[5] "The Encampment," *San Antonio Daily Express*, September 11, 1891.

of people would prefer to see the negroes [*sic*] kept out of the Volunteer Guard, but that is neither here nor there nor anywhere in this case. The statutes guarantee them the privilege of taking up arms, and furthermore, the Volunteer Guard has a serious purpose apart from any picnic or pageant, a purpose which these men will in time of need subserve admirably."[6] Mabry not only classified these black militiamen as "creditable soldiers," but also noted again the rights guaranteed them under "the statutes" and the "serious purpose" for which the Volunteer Guard existed.

The state's Militia Law of 1879 provided the necessary requirements for company organizations, the commissioning of officers, the duties of the Adjutant General, penalties and courts-martials, directions on responding to invasions, insurrections, and aiding civil authorities, and the obligations of its members. Chapter Four of this law contained the statutes that outlined the legal requirements of the citizens who desired to form individual militia companies, which began with an assembly of "any number of male persons."[7] Electing officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, and the position of secretary, this assembly of men exercised direct representation in selecting those who led them. The secretary, often viewed as an element associated with fraternal groups, or interpreted as a required necessity for black companies composed of illiterate men, served as a basic requirement by law. Upon completing officer elections, the men swore allegiance to the Constitution of Texas and the U.S. Constitution. Next, the captain of the company completed, in duplicate, the

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[6] Ibid.

[7] *The Revised Statutes of Texas,* Title LXIV, Militia Law (Galveston: A. H. Belo & Company, 1879), 473.

register of its members prior to submitting it to the Adjutant General's Office. These muster rolls, "duly certified under his hand, to be a correct muster roll of the company *[naming it]* . . ." signified that not only did each member of the company participate in the selection of their leader, but may have also contributed to the name of the company."[8]

With the exception of the Excelsior Guards of San Antonio, the majority of the militia company names chose names of recognized prominent individuals, such as former General and President Ulysses S. Grant, President Abraham Lincoln, Texas Democratic Governor Richard Coke, and Robert Bradley Hawley, the Republican U.S. Senator from Galveston. Exactly how the men of San Antonio chose their company name remains a mystery, but why they chose it supports the earlier contention of why African Americans served in the militia. The word "excelsior," translated from the Latin as "ever-higher" or for many, "onward and upward," identified what they hoped to achieve through their involvement as citizen soldiers.

The next step required to establish a militia company directed the company's commanding officer to obtain a surety bond in order to receive state property such as arms, ammunition, bayonets, accoutrements, and so on. A surety is the person or persons who become responsible for the debt or obligations of another. In this instance the captain had to possess the ability to gather financial support from three individuals within the community. The surety bonds expose the relationship between the

[8] Ibid., 474. The italicized and bracketed "*[naming it]*" is presented here exactly as it is written in the Militia Law text.

commanding officers and other citizens, and more importantly show how those changed over time.

The bond filed by Captain Charles Brown of San Antonio's Coke Rifles in 1880 listed the name of the city's white mayor and two prominent black citizens. Two years later, Captain John Van Duzor of the Excelsior Guards guaranteed the company's state property on the word of three white citizens (the district court clerk, the deputy county clerk, and an attorney). In 1884 Jacob Lyons took the reins of the company and his bond contained the signatures of three black businessmen (two barbers and a saloonkeeper), but when Simon Turner filed his bond in 1886 and 1887 it again listed three prominent white citizens. A bond for the company guaranteed solely by black citizens occurred again in 1892 and 1894, but the remainder of the record shows a combination of one to two white individuals with either one or two black businessmen acting as sureties for the commanding officer. It appears that at times the leaders of the Excelsior Guards maintained a social and economic bridge between the social and racial divide in San Antonio.[9]

The bonds in Galveston uncover a different relationship. The bond for the short-lived Island City Rifles in 1876 listed as sureties three white individuals, an accountant, a manufacturing agent, and an employee of the Galveston Bank and Trust Company. While the evidence remains elusive, the loss of financial support from these three might have contributed to the company's dissolution in 1879 when the *Galveston Daily News*

[9] "Bonds," Coke Rifles, T.V.G., Record Group 401, Texas State Archives (cited hereafter TSA), Austin; ibid.., Excelsior Guards, ibid.

announced that fourteen militia companies across Texas were disbanded for failure to comply with the state's new militia law. The bonds for the Grant Rifles from 1880 to 1883, and the Lincoln Guards from 1880 to 1893, reflected no involvement from the white citizenry, only a collection of prominent members of the black community. Norris Wright Cuney and his brother, Joseph Cuney, a teacher and U.S. customs official, led this group, which also included merchant Van Buren Davis, physician Louis M. Wilkens, businessman Henry P. Whittlesey, and J. H. Washington, a teacher, minister, and politician. At other times African American draymen, cotton screwmen, barbers, or saloonkeepers acted as surety for these militia companies. The relationships revealed in Galveston present several conclusions. First, the city's economic growth made it possible for certain members of the black community to guarantee the financial obligations of the company. Second, the strong political presence and ability of Norris Wright Cuney, a Republican presidential appointee as the U.S. Customs Collector for the Port of Galveston, gave to those who supported him political positions that contributed to the financial support of their activities. Perhaps the most plausible conclusion for both cities rests on political connections and paternalism. In San Antonio the black community negotiated their political allegiance to leading white Republicans in return for social privileges while in Galveston, Cuney's political, social, and economic leadership represented the black community in city affairs.[10]

[10] "Bonds," Island City Rifles, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin; ibid., Grant Rifles, ibid.; ibid., Lincoln Guards, ibid.; "From the State Capital," *Galveston Daily News*, May 5, 1880. See also G.O. 7, April 6, 1880, Adjutant General, State of Texas. No records exist for the Hawley Guards.

After completing the election of officers, oath of allegiance, and muster rolls, and obtaining the surety bond, this legally mandated information was submitted to the Texas Adjutant General's Office. Legally, the law required the Adjutant General to issue a certificate to *every company* that fulfilled the prerequisites outlined within the articles of the Texas Militia Law; yet, in practice, this simply did not occur, for both black and white companies. The exact reason, or reasons, behind this failure remains unclear, but the strongest culprit seems to hinge on the state's perennial budgetary problems. The companies fortunate to receive a certificate of recognition were required to adhere to the provisions of the law, which included company drill, as well as annual inspections and camps of instruction.[11]

The Citizen Soldiers at the Armory

The local armory served as the focal point for each militia company. The armory often acted as the scene of various social events that have been misinterpreted in the past as the militia's main purpose. In fact, these events not only highlighted the military skill of the men serving in the company, but created racial solidarity and more importantly, raised much needed financial assistance for the militia company. Additionally, the citizen soldiers met at the armory to drill or to launch ceremonial duties within the black community, duties that demonstrated the militiamen's status as citizens of the state and nation. In 1889 the *San Antonio Daily Light* carried a few notes on the activities of the

[11] *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 474.

Excelsior Guards. In July, the paper published an order for the members of the company "to meet in their armory Friday night for the purpose of electing a captain vice Simon Turner, who intends to resign."[12] One month later, the newspaper mentioned on the front page the guards' presence at a benefit concert for Benjamin F. Wallace, who had received an appointment to Paul Quinn College in Waco. Wallace, a laborer for the Herff family, had served in the guards for three years. And, the day after Christmas, the newspaper ordered the militia company "to attend a special meeting tonight at the armory on Crockett street, to make arrangements for the funeral of the deceased member, W. A. Hardin . . ."[13] Hardin, a laborer in the Southern Pacific Railroad's shops, had served as the company's secretary in 1887 during the first year of his three-year enlistment.[14]

The leading newspaper in Galveston also announced some of its black militiamen's activities. The *Galveston Daily News* on October 23, 1879 recorded that "at Stanley Hall, corner of avenue L and Twenty-eighth street last night, the Lincoln Guards gave an entertainment and supper . . . The company drilled in the hall previous to the supper, showing themselves creditably proficient in the manual of arms."[15] Three months later the newspaper announced that "the newly-organized colored company, which has taken the title of 'Lincoln Guards,' were out for drill on Tremont street last

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[12] "City Local News," *San Antonio Daily Light,* July 24, 1889.
[13] "Excelsior Guards, Attention," *San Antonio Daily Light,* December 26, 1889.

[14] "Will Give Him A Benefit," *San Antonio Daily Light,* August 12, 1889; Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards).

[15] "The City," *Galveston Daily News,* October 23, 1879.

evening and attracted considerable attention."[16] Unfortunately, this news story failed to describe exactly where on Tremont Street the drill occurred or what group of citizens gave the event its "considerable attention"; yet, this drill placed the militia company outdoors and at least three major streets to the east of their armory.

Nevertheless, the most crucial function of the armory encompassed its housing of the unit's arms and equipment that the citizen soldiers utilized during their military drill. According to Article 3313 of the 1879 Militia Law, "each company of volunteer guards shall assemble for parade and drill at least once in a month, at such time and place as may be designated by its commanding officer."[17] The records for the African American militia companies in San Antonio and Galveston show that they surpassed this requirement revealing a seriousness and firm commitment to their purpose. The Galveston companies drilled weekly, with the Grant Rifles averaging 25 men and the Lincoln Guards with an average of 29 men. The Excelsior Guards, however, drilled twice weekly and counted an average attendance of 27 men. To substantially surpass the legal requirement exhibits the level of importance these citizen soldiers placed on such an exercise, and on militia membership itself.[18]

These nighttime drills prepared the militiamen to respond quickly to orders and to familiarize themselves with the use of firearms. The black militia companies initially received some of the oldest rifles in the state inventory and their condition often

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[16] "The City," *Galveston Daily News*, January 22, 1880.

[17] *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 476.

[18] The Galveston militia companies averaged 40 men in the unit while the Excelsior Guards averaged 41 men during its existence.

provoked the disgust of the company commanding officer. Lincoln Guards' Captain Mitt Brantly, in 1886, relayed to Adjutant General Wilburn Hill King that the company's "guns are so old and becoming out of order so fast that I would [be] afraid to advance upon an enemy."[19] And again in 1887, Brantley expressed his frustration when he stated that "if the company were called on by special civil service it would be unnecessary to go depending upon the guns for they would be of little service."[20] Still, Texas Volunteer Guard Captain Lamartine Sieker, who in 1889 inspected individual militia companies, both white and black, reported to King that the Lincoln Guards "have 35 guns in good, clean serviceable condition."[21] An examination of the 1887 muster rolls discloses that Brantley had received the "old guns" from the Washington Guards, one of Galveston's white companies; yet, after his consecutive complaints the roll for 1888 records that he had received his guns from the "Governor of the State, L. S. Ross."[22] A year later, the thirty-five rifles listed in the possession of the Lincoln Guards, as supported by Sieker's report, now documented a different caliber than those listed a year previous, signaling either an error on the report or a different set of rifles. These rifles might possibly have been the last issued to the company. Beginning in 1893, Captain Louis Taylor

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[19] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards).

[20] Ibid.

[21] L.P. Sieker to W.H. King, October 1889, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin. Sieker, a Confederate veteran, served as the quartermaster for the Texas Rangers. Adjutant King also fought for the Confederacy. See *The New Handbook of Texas*, ed. Ronnie C. Tyler (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 3:1108-9, 5:1043.

[22] Muster rolls, Lincoln Guards.

continually recorded the condition of the company's arms as "old and broken."[23] Even Captain Tony A. Smith of the Hawley Guards in 1904 stated that "this command is sadly in need of uniforms and new ordnance as this has been condemned repeatedly and is old and obsolete."[24] Whether these rifles remained with the Galveston companies, or not, serviceable weapons in the hands of the city's black citizen soldiers, once initially maintained, had deteriorated.

When Captain Sieker inspected the Excelsior Guards in 1887 he stated that he "found the arms of this company in fair condition considering the age of their guns."[25] Adjutant General King responded with a handwritten note ordering Sieker to "call in old guns and send 25 to 30 good second hand cal. 45. & accoutrements."[26] During the annual encampment of colored troops in 1891 Texas Volunteer Guard Inspector General Colonel R. H. Bruce commented in his report that he had "never in my life have I seen a better and more thoroughly policed camp in every detail"; however, he could not comment as positively on the condition of the arms and equipment.[27] Bruce noted that the deficiencies had been "caused of course by the lack of attention by the men to their arms, some guns we would inspect would be full of dust and dirt."[28] Bruce failed to

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Muster rolls, Hawley Guards, Texas National Guard (cited hereafter as T.N.G.), Record Group 401, TSA, Austin (cited hereafter as Muster rolls, Hawley Guards).

[25] L. P. Sieker to W. H. King, September 3, 1887, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[26] Ibid.

[27] R. H. Bruce to W. H. Mabry, August 26, 1891, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[28] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards.

mention what Eskridge observed when he wrote that the arms were "badly out of repair" and that "no provision made by the State for repairs."[29] The inspection reports from this encampment also indicated that the Excelsior Guards drilled with a .45 caliber Springfield Model 1878, but the members of the Lincoln Guards handled either a Model 1873, 1878, or 1884. It appears that the Excelsior Guards might have eventually received some Model 1884s. The company's captain, Eugene Ogden Bowles, with Van Duzor, and two other black citizens of San Antonio, retired U.S. Army sergeant John H. Martin, and Professor Ed Thomas, petitioned Mabry to exchange twelve of their Model 1878 for the Model 1884 "as two different patterns of arms in one command makes a marked contrast" denoting that sometime between 1893 and 1896 the guardsmen must have obtained some of the newer models.[30] As late as 1899 Captain Robert G. Ellis of the Excelsior Guards reported the condition of his thirty-three rifles in good condition.[31]

While not suggesting that these African American companies ever acquired equipment equal in condition as that possessed by their white counterparts, this evidence does appear to illustrate that the governor, or Adjutant General responded, and attempted at a minimum, to equip some of the black militia companies with serviceable weapons; thus, providing evidence that the state viewed these companies as military units.

The ordnance reports for the Lincoln and Excelsior Guards provide further

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[29] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1890-1891* (Austin: Henry Hutchings, State Printer, 1892), 85.

[30] E. O. Bowles, John F. Van Duzor, John H. Martin, Ed Thomas to W. H. Mabry, August 15, 1896, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[31] Muster rolls, Excelsior Guards.

evidence of this classification as military organizations. In Galveston, Captain Brantley reported the use of 250 rifle ball cartridges for target practice between October 1, 1888 and September 30, 1889. A year later Captain George W. Wilson reported 300 cartridges expended for drill and target practice, and recorded 580 cartridges still on hand in 1890. When Louis Taylor took charge of the company he reported on his annual muster in 1891 that the guardsmen used 35 rounds during the year with an additional 800 cartridges on hand.[32]

Likewise, the Excelsior Guards fired 300 cartridges between October 1, 1889 and September 30, 1890 for drills, funerals, and salutes. The San Antonio militia company recorded a balance of 600 cartridges on hand in 1888. Reduced to only 100 by 1894, the company reported one year later to have used 200 with a balance on-hand of 500, but by 1897 the unit could register only a total of 50 rounds available. Captain Robert Ellis pleaded with Adjutant General Mabry for more ammunition, requesting 1000 rounds on October 5, 1897 and again on November 13, 1897 when he informed Mabry that he hoped "such an emergency might not arise, yet if the unforeseen should happen, and my Company be called out, I would not be in condition to serve the state, except with empty guns."[33] Mabry responded four days later, replying "no ammunition on hand."[34] After the company expended its last fifty rounds in 1898, no further records exist as to the amount of ammunition in the armories of either the Excelsior or Lincoln Guards.

Replacing unserviceable rifles, multiple requests to replenish ammunition, and

[32] Ordnance Returns, Lincoln Guards, T.V.G., Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[33] R. G. Ellis to W. H. Mabry, November 13, 1897, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[34] Ibid.

the firing of their rifles demonstrates that African American citizen soldiers could successfully conduct military-type activities within these two cities. Not only did the men appear in uniforms and under arms, they fired their weapons. Without a doubt, these actions support the classification of these militia companies as recognized military units both in the black community, the city itself, and at the state level.

Militiamen on Parade

Historian Elizabeth Turner argues that "parades, although peaceable and often joyous, brought with them a confrontational edge, emphatically stating a right to the streets, challenging notice by dominant groups, and reinterpreting the meaning of events differently from the dominant culture."[35] Historian Shane White contends that parades acted as the means of expression for African Americans to "enter public life" and to proclaim to those who observed them that "we too are American workers and citizens."[36] For the black community in San Antonio and Galveston, the annual celebration of freedom, or Emancipation Day, involved the largest outpouring of its citizenry. Gathering to celebrate the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas on June 19, 1866, these events in San Antonio usually commenced with an extensive parade

[35] Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 250.

[36] Shane White, "'It Was a Proud Day:' African Americans, Festivals, and Parades in the North, 1741-1834," *Journal of American History* 81 (June 1994): 13-50. See also David Waldstreich, *In The Midst of Perpetual Fetes, the Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). While both White and Waldstreich examine parades during an earlier period in U.S. history, the meanings and purposes remained the same during this study.

that, according to historian Judith Berg-Sobré, contained "volunteer firemen, baseball teams, fraternal organizations and social clubs, cyclists, girls as American allegorical figures, unions, militia companies, and dignitaries in carriages" and these components "were typical of any American parade of the period."[37] Black Galvestonians conducted parades, played baseball, exhibited drilling militia companies, and enjoyed picnics, dancing and speeches from prominent citizens. Neither city nor the actions of its African American militia companies differed greatly on this holiday as the black communities of each showcased their citizenship and progress made since their freedom in 1866. The participation of black militia companies in Emancipation Day ceremonies, seen mostly as solely an African American celebration, should surprise no one. Contrasting sharply with these all-inclusive black parades are those that comprised African American citizen soldiers with various elements of white society.

Most parades consist of a linear formation of groups broken into positions within that formation according to level of importance, or prominence. During this period the prevailing attitude of white superiority dictated that the parade must reflect the racial and social hierarchy of the community. African Americans, or more significantly, black citizen soldiers marching in a racially-mixed parade, could create some problems with the stated social order, revealing racial attitudes and responses.

The only instance of such a parade in Galveston occurred in 1880 when former President Ulysses Grant visited the Island City. The *New York Times* reported that in the

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[37] Judith Berg-Sobré, *San Antonio on Parade: Six Historic Festivals* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 72.

parade, led by the city's German Band, the Lincoln Guards marched behind the Galveston Artillery and Washington Guards, both white companies, but in front of several black benevolent societies and carriages containing Grant, General Philip Sheridan, General Edward Ord, and the mayor of Galveston. Carriages of other prominent citizens, the Cadet Colored Band, and Galveston's fire companies followed the dignitaries. Grant later received all visitors, including the company of black citizen soldiers, in the parlor of the Tremont Hotel. The Lincoln Guards virtually passed in review as they marched through the parlor, saluting Grant as they passed. The Guards also conducted a reception (see Figure 10) for the general, but it remains unclear if he attended.[38]

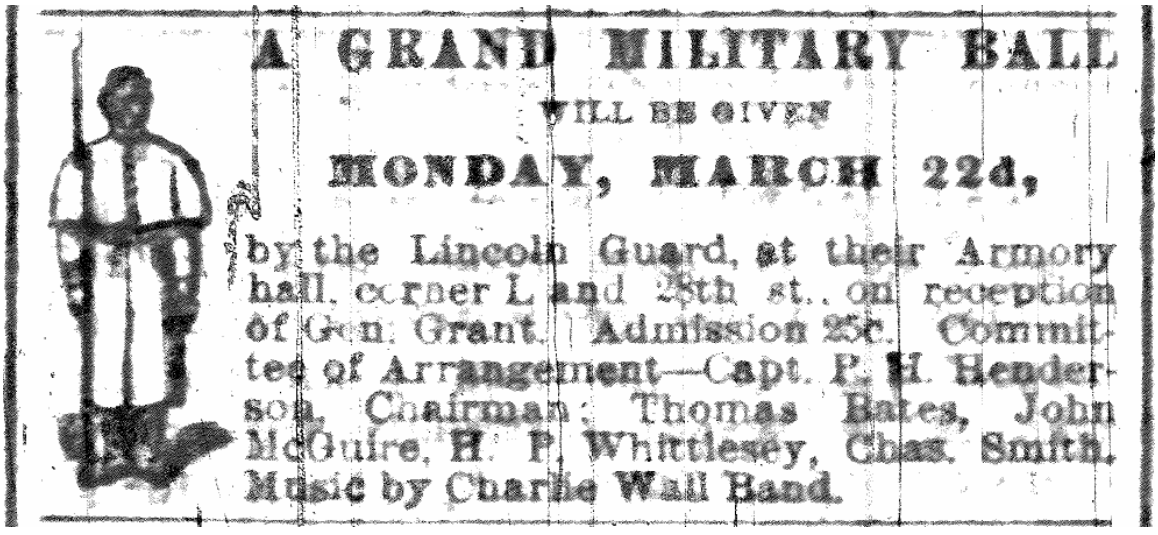

Figure 10. Advertisement. *From Galveston Daily News 1880.*

[38] "Gen. Grant Reaches Galveston," *New York Times,* March 24, 1880; "Grant's Visit," *Galveston Daily News,* March 24, 1880.

In San Antonio on May 30, 1887, Decoration Day, the predecessor to our modern Memorial Day, witnessed a parade containing U.S. troops, led by General David Sloan Stanley, followed by the Excelsior Guards, city firemen, police, and Union veterans who were members of the Grand Army of the Republic post. The *San Antonio Light* mentioned that the veterans of "the Grand Army wanted to take precedence, but the Excelsiors refused to yield."[39] The *Galveston Daily News* described this refusal more succinctly when it stated "the Grand Army of the Republic, firemen and Excelsior Guards (colored) were in line, but the Grand Army men and firemen created a little sensation by breaking ranks at the corner of Houston and Soledad streets because they were placed behind the negro [*sic*] company."[40] Not only did this group break ranks, but they proceeded to another street corner with the intention of cutting off the black militiamen. The paper reported "they succeeded temporarily, but by a private command from their captain the Excelsiors took the curbstone, marched in double-quick time and regained their place at the corner of Yturia and Commerce streets."[41] Placed in this position again, the fire companies left the parade and no violence occurred after the incident.

A year later at the gathering of Civil War veterans in the city no conflict occurred because the Excelsior Guards marched behind the Belknap Rifles, one of San Antonio's

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[39] "Decoration Day," *San Antonio Daily Light,* May 30, 1887.

[40] "Decoration Day," *Galveston Daily News,* May 31, 1887.

[41] Ibid. Simon Turner served as the captain of the company at this time.

white companies, at the rear of the parade.[42] In 1891 these two militia companies crossed paths again as they returned home from out-of-state drill competitions, the Rifles, from Indianapolis, Indiana, where they had won second place, and the Guards, from Atlanta, Georgia, after securing the first prize at the Piedmont Exposition. However, as they disembarked from the train, each company took similar routes, but each in its own procession. The Belknap Rifles terminated their parade formation at Travis Park as the Excelsior Guards marched down Houston Street to Alamo Plaza. Instead of following in the footsteps of the Belknap Rifles, the black militiamen, in one view, accomplished a moral victory by conducting a parade of their own after winning the $500.00 first prize at Atlanta. They paraded again through a major city in uniform and under arms, and in the presence of San Antonio's white citizens, who reportedly "cheered and applauded them quite generously as they did the Belknaps."[43] This recognition seemed to demonstrate some progress socially and politically at least within the city of San Antonio.

The presence of U.S. Army troops, or of Republican Party influence became the common denominator of racially mixed parades. During this period San Antonio could acknowledge the accomplishments of its black citizen soldiers by allowing them a place in a few of these mixed celebrations, but eliminated this participation after 1888 while Galveston failed to conduct this type of parade after Grant's visit in 1880. Yet, even as late as the early 1890s African American citizen soldiers continued to march as a

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[42] "The Gray and the Blue," *Galveston Daily News*, August 18, 1888.

[43] "Our Militia," *San Antonio Daily Light*, July 10, 1891.

component of "a well-regulated militia" through the streets of their respective cities demonstrating their right to keep and bear arms.[44]

The Colored Encampments

The most serious deficiency in the 1879 Texas Militia Law involved the lack of a requirement for the state to fund its legal requirements, especially the one that directed the volunteer guards to "assemble in encampment once in each year, at such time and place as the commander-in-chief may direct" – a constant frustration, not only for the men who served through the years as the Adjutant General, but also for both the white and black militia companies under his command.[45] In his annual report for 1899-1900, Adjutant General Thomas Scurry included an exhibit entitled "Annual Appropriation made by each State and Territory for its National Guard, showing Number of Organized Militia and the Pro Rata per Man of Appropriation made by Each."[46] This chart illustrated the horrendous lack of support by the Texas Legislature, ranking the state third from last in annual spending per militiaman. Only New Mexico Territory with a militia force of 403 and South Carolina with over three thousand militiamen spent less. This same chart cataloged an annual appropriation in Georgia of over three times that of Texas, but historian Frances Smith asserts that the black Georgian citizen soldiers "had

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[44] "From Our Notebooks," *Atlanta Constitution,* July 7, 1891.

[45] *Revised Statutes of Texas*, 476.

[46] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1899-1900* (Austin: Von Boeckman, Schutze & Co., State Printers, 1900), 35.

received only a few dollars of support from the state in three decades."[47] The financial situation in Ohio, contends historian Lowell Black, was similar. Black argues that for the African American militia "the major conflict was money" in retaining enlisted black men, "that the purchases of sidearms and ceremonial swords pinched its budget considerably," and "despite revenue from contributing members, the companies' expenditures far exceeded their incomes."[48] The state of Ohio instead of continuing its failure to support the militia, amended its militia law and began to support all its militia companies, including those comprised of African Americans, with money to maintain company equipment, armory rent, and even provided compensation to militiamen while in the service to the state. By 1897, Ohio outspent Texas by over 25 percent in its annual contribution to its citizen soldiers. Even the *San Antonio Daily Express* recognized this funding shortfall in an 1893 editorial by announcing that "there is now talk of organizing a 'Texas Military Bicycle Corps.' The paper jokingly stated that "perhaps the boys are hedging against the parsimony of future legislatures, which may fail to provide for their transportation to state encampments."[49] Overall, the fundamental

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[47] Frances Smith, "Black Militia in Savannah, Georgia, 1872-1905" (master's thesis, Georgia Southern College, 1981), 81.

[48] Lowell Dwight Black, "The Negro Volunteer Militia Units of the Ohio National Guard, 1870-1954: The Struggle for Military Recognition and Equality in the State of Ohio" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1976), 184.

[49] "Editorial," *San Antonio Daily Express*, September 18, 1893. The U.S. Army tested the practicality of replacing horses with bicycles in 1897 with 9 African American troopers from the U.S. 25th Infantry Regiment. This editorial occurs four years prior to this experiment and due to the added financial burden that maintaining bicycles would have caused to the state's black militia companies, it remains unlikely that just because the U.S. Army assigned this evaluation to blacks that the state would do the same. Therefore, this editorial simply criticizes the lack of state funding, nothing more. See John H. Nankivell, *The History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926* (Fort Collins, CO: Old Army Press, 1972), 60-4.

lack of monetary support plagued the training and development of the Texas Volunteer Guard, both white and black, throughout its history.

The absence of state financial aid to train its militiamen caused some communities to host citizen-sponsored events. These occasions gave the troops an opportunity to showcase their military skill and generated income for both them and the local community, but more importantly, they served as an opportunity for the black citizen soldier, and his white counterpart, to train in the art of war. For the African American militiamen, these opportunities often coincided with Emancipation Day celebrations, festivals known as Afro-American fairs, or public demonstrations of military capabilities. The first such event, conducted in Houston in 1881, pitted its local company against the Lincoln Guards. Later, in 1887 the mayor of Fort Worth welcomed both the Lincoln and Excelsior Guards to the city by announcing "it was eminently fitting that first state fair ever attempted by the colored people of Texas should be held in city of Fort Worth, where reside a goodly number of the most intelligent, aspiring, and progressive representatives of the African race."[50] The first battalion-size encampment, held in San Antonio in September, 1889, began with a downtown parade led by the Nineteen U.S. Infantry Regiment Band followed by four companies of black citizen soldiers and six carriages containing members of the encampment committee and orators. While the men failed to schedule any battalion-size drills, they conducted guard mounting, company drill, and, to please the crowds and their benefactors, "exhibition

[50] "First Day of the Fair," *Forth Worth Gazette*, October 26, 1887.

drill."[51] In the absence of state funding, these African American citizen soldiers demonstrated their zeal of purpose by conducting their own military training under the direction of their own commanding officer, Major Jacob Lyons, who continued to play a prominent role in their activities.

Some state funding for annual encampments, both white and black, occurred briefly between the years 1890 and 1893. Units of each race conducted training exercises separately at different times of the year, but often used the same location. With success hinging on free transportation from the various railroads and equipment supplied by the U.S. Army, these camps of instruction were conducted on strict military guidelines and featured military training under the guidance of various U.S. military officers.

General Order No. 69 issued from the State's Adjutant General Office authorized the encampment of the Battalion of Colored Infantry in San Antonio from September 24 to 27, 1890. Major Lyons, commanding the battalion, requested and received the authority to conduct the encampment; thus, this order resulted from the efforts of one man who sought the same opportunity for his men that the white companies had received only two months previous. The men of the battalion traveled for free, "armed, equipped, and uniformed under the law" and received "subsistence without charge" during camp and, for some companies, during the course of their travel to San Antonio.[52]

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[51] "The Colored Encampment," *San Antonio Daily Express,* September 25, 1889.

[52] *Report of the Adjutant General for 1889-1890,* 18, 86. The Brazos Light Guards and Lincoln Guards received 75 cents per man per day while traveling.

The encampment opened with a street parade on the morning of September 24. Marching through the streets and various plazas of San Antonio, this contingent of black troops comprising five militia companies and two bands totaled approximately two-hundred men.[53] During this parade the *San Antonio Daily Light* reported that "crowds of both white and black spectators lined the curbstones on the line of parade, and on reaching Alamo Plaza about fifteen minutes were consumed in putting the soldiers through military evolutions for the edification of the public."[54] Upon their arrival at San Pedro Springs, Major Lyons issued his first general order in accordance with General Order No. 69, announcing his assumption of command of the camp and designating the military gathering as Camp Attucks. Killed by British troops in the so-called Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770, Crispus Attucks is recognized as the first African American to die in the struggle for American rights. By dedicating the camp of instruction for colored troops to his memory, Lyons recognized Attucks' efforts as a citizen soldier, and sacrifice, in the name of freedom and used him as an example of higher ideals to those who attended the encampment.[55]

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[53] The *Dallas Morning News* reported 221 men in the procession while the Morning Report for September 24, 1890 depicts 179 men, but fails to note the 24 or 25 men of the Harvey brass band of San Antonio that were not officially associated with the Texas Volunteer Guard.

[54] "Colored Encampment," *San Antonio Daily Light*, September 24, 1890.

[55] Ibid.; "Alamo City Advices," *Dallas Morning News*, September 25, 1890. *Report of the Adjutant General for 1889-1890*, 88. The battalion's adjutant, Thomas J. Dilwood, a native of Boston, may have had a hand in suggesting Attucks.

The second general order issued by Lyons detailed the "daily exercises for the government of troops in camp."[56] This order consisted of the specific times for each scheduled event of the encampment. It dictated the time to sleep, to wake up, to respond for meals, to submit reports to the camp adjutant, to see the camp surgeon if ill, but more importantly it listed the times for guard mount, drill, and officers' instruction, each of which consisted of military training. Captain Richard I. Eskridge of the U.S. Twenty-Third Infantry Regiment, detailed to inspect the colored troops' encampment, mentioned in his report that "the men show an earnest desire to discharge their duties" and "a want of knowledge of detail."[57]

The last day of the encampment closed with a grand parade on the grounds. The *San Antonio Daily Express* observed that the Excelsior Guards looked "very soldierly in their neat, ornamental uniforms and white helmets, with plumes of blue and white feathers" and "the Galveston company was particularly noticeable for its easy swing and correct company movement."[58] While Adjutant General King recorded that the expense to the state of only $526.62, Lyons claimed an additional expenditure of $308.07 – illustrating either an incorrect report from the Adjutant General, or that the members of the colored battalion paid from their own pockets almost half of the expenses of this encampment.

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[56] First Battalion, Colored, Texas Volunteer Guard, G.O. 2, September 24, 1890, Adjutant General Correspondence, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[57] *Report of the Adjutant General for 1889-1890,* 90.
[58] "At Camp Attucks," *San Antonio Daily Express,* September 28, 1890.

A year later, Mabry issued General Order No. 12 on August 15, 1891 ordering the battalion to San Antonio to participate in an annual camp of instruction. This order dictated mandatory attendance and stated that those companies "failing to attend Encampment, will be promptly disbanded."[59] In a snub to the Piedmont champions, the guardsmen failed to gain the free use of San Pedro Park and had to move south of the city. The encampment, held at Riverside Park from August 19 to 23, featured guard mount with battalion and company skirmish drill and for the first time a cash prize to the company with the highest score in grounds' and quarters' cleanliness. This camp memorialized the service of Captain André Cailloux, whom historian Stephen J. Ochs described as "a thirty-eight-year-old Afro-Creole . . . lauded as the nation's first black military hero, one of the first black men to hold an officer's commission in the United States Army, and a member of the first black regiment to be officially mustered into the Union army and to engage in a major battle."[60] Captain Cailloux, killed while moving "in advance of his troops urging them to follow him" at the battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana on May 27, 1863, commanded a company in the Native Guards regiment of New Orleans.[61] Again Major Lyons, who commanded the encampment, appears to have wanted to intentionally inspire the battalion's citizen soldiers with an example of African American heroism.

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[59] *Report of the Adjutant General for 1890-1891,* 82.

[60] J. F. Van Duzor to Camp Bakers Flam and Filbert, August 23, 1891, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin. Stephen J. Ochs, *A Black Patriot and a White Priest: André Cailloux and Claude Paschal Maistre in Civil War New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 1.

[61] Ochs, *Black Patriot and a White Priest*, 144.

Once again the railroads furnished free transportation and the U.S. Army detailed Captain Eskridge as the inspecting officer. Eskridge, accompanied by Lieutenant Hunter Liggett of the Fifth U.S. Infantry Regiment and "three well instructed Sergeants of the Twenty-third Infantry, as instructors" recommended in his report that "one more Company be added to this Battalion, making a total of six, for the sake of symmetry, convenience in drill, etc."[62] The Lincoln Guards won the cash prize of $25.00 for the best quarters during the encampment with a score of 11.6 out of 12, while the Excelsior Guards trailed all companies with a score of 9.3. Of the 188 men enrolled at that time in the Battalion of Colored Infantry, 137 attended the encampment. Mabry reported that "the negro [*sic*] soldier possesses many of the elements necessary for the maintenance of a good volunteer organization, and with proper officers to command him, he becomes efficient in the drill and other duties of camp and field."[63]

In 1892 the railroads discontinued the free transportation of citizen soldiers, both black and white, to their annual encampments. For the Colored Battalion, this decision resulted in the mandatory attendance of only those companies near Austin and the inability of the Lincoln Guards to attend. The activities of this camp of instruction mirrored those of the encampments from the previous two years with one important and meaningful exception. The staff and officers of the battalion, led by Lyons and Van Duzor, forwarded to the Democratic Governor, James Stephen Hogg, a petition stating:

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[62] *Report of the Adjutant General for 1890-1891,* 85-6.

[63] Ibid., 8.

> "That the negroes [*sic*] of Texas, of whom we form a part, have a just pride in all that contributes in any way to the upbuilding and greatness of their state and for whose dignity their patriotism would impel them to a willing sacrifice of their lives when called upon to sustain it, and believing that these commendable objects would be, in no little degree, brought about by a liberal encouragement of an increase in the number of companies (there being now only five in the state) from hundreds of good and trusty men, who stand ready and willing to comply with every requirement of the law."[64]

The request failed to accomplish any increase in the number of African American militia companies in the State of Texas; however, its submission to the governor demonstrated a high level of assertiveness by this small group of black citizen soldiers. Unfortunately, the day following this petition to the governor Major Lyons resigned his commission, not in the militia, but as the commanding officer of the battalion. George W. Wilson of Galveston later secured the election to command in his place.

The following year, in 1893, the legislature again failed to appropriate any funds for transportation to the legally mandated annual encampments. Since the militiamen had to pay their own way to the camp, Mabry gave them "the privilege of selecting the point at which to hold the encampment."[65] Therefore, on September 4, Mabry issued General Order No. 75 calling for the Battalion of Colored Infantry to assemble for a

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[64] "The Colored Encampment," *Austin Daily Statesman,* August 27, 1892.

[65] "Colored Encampment," *San Antonio Daily Express,* September 16, 1893.

camp of instruction in San Antonio, but recognized that since "said attendance is to be without expense to the State for transportation, this order is not compulsory."[66] The military activities of this encampment, named Camp Wilson after Major Wilson, the battalion's new commanding officer, included guard mount, battalion and company drills, as well as officer instruction.

Following this brief period, the Texas State Legislature, due to budget deficits, withheld funding for the volunteer guard. Mabry, in his report for 1895-96, noted "that the Texas Volunteer Guard has been reduced, for lack of proper encouragement, from 64 companies with 3,000 officers and enlisted men, on December 31, 1894, to 48 companies, with an aggregate of 215 officers and 2,246 enlisted men, at this date."[67] Despite this reduction, however, the Battalion, Colored Infantry remained at its normal strength – five companies. And, instead of disbanding through "lack of encouragement" these African American citizen soldiers resumed the practice of citizen-sponsored events. Major George Wilson, commanding the battalion, organized an encampment in Galveston in June 1895 by negotiating reduced fares from the railroad. One year later, in August 1896, the Board of Directors of the Afro-American State Fair Association chose Houston to host its event and invited the battalion to attend. Mabry maintained a headquarters tent on the grounds and a board of inspectors comprised of high-ranking volunteer guardsmen tended to training needs and to camp and drill evaluations.

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[66] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1893-1894* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., State Printers, 1895), 42.

[67] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1895-96* (Austin: Ben C. Jones & Co., State Printers, 1897), 4.

W. H. Browning, the secretary of the committee for arrangement for the colored encampment scheduled for September 1897 in Brenham wrote Mabry that "since we have gone so very far in the matter we would be pleased to have it go out, but we want on the other hand an opportunity to sustain our honest citizenship."[68] Captain Louis Taylor citing that his "men are all employed in cotton presses and long shore work," requested to be excused from the event since "the men are liable to lose their jobs should they attend."[69] After transportation difficulties, the Excelsior Guards finally arrived in Brenham only to receive orders to go home. The reason for the order, according to a telegram from the mayor of Brenham wired to Mabry on September 22, stating "yellow fever at Beaumont and the people here are much excited – strict quarantine declared – stop all troops on the way here."[70] The *San Antonio Light* published an article that same day reporting the death of a small boy from yellow fever in Beaumont and detailed that "many are led to think that the mail service is bringing fever into the state and the governor will be asked to cut out all train service of any kind between Louisiana and Texas."[71] No encampment occurred for the black troops in 1897.

The African American citizen soldiers in Galveston and San Antonio valued their membership in the militia. Exhibiting a strong sense of duty through hard work at frequent nightly drills, these black militiamen sought recognition through their

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[68] W. H. Browning to W. H. Mabry, September 11, 1897, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[69] Louis Taylor to W. H. Mabry, September 16, 1897, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

[70] J. A. Wilkins to W. H. Mabry, September 22, 1897, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin. Captain R. G. Ellis worked diligently with Mabry to obtain free transportation over several railroad lines and finally arrived on September 22 with 41 men only to be ordered home.

[71] "Yellow Jack in Texas," *San Antonio Light*, September 22, 1897.

participation in local activities and parades. They desired to increase their military skills through the medium of annual camps of instruction. When such camps failed to materialize due to lack of state funding, these men overcame such obstacles by attending events meant to showcase the progress and improved status of the African race. Whether they marched in a celebration of freedom or fired their weapons during a sham battle at an encampment, they demonstrated their rights as citizens and their position as members of the Texas Volunteer Guard. However, their disappointment towards the cancellation of the encampment in 1897 paled in comparison to the year that followed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: DISAPPOINTMENT AND DISSOLUTION

The sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana harbor on February 18, 1898 sparked the already heated debate regarding Spanish colonial control of Cuba and the Philippine Islands. The loss of the battleship and President William McKinley's subsequent calling for 100,000 volunteers to bolster the U.S. Army, gave African American citizens, especially those who had served faithfully in the First Battalion, Colored Infantry of the Texas Volunteer Guard, an opportunity to serve their country. Two years later, the Great Storm of 1900 destroyed portions of the city of Galveston, providing another chance for the black citizen soldiers to serve in an emergency. And finally, the new U.S. Militia Law of 1903 that provided much-needed federal monetary assistance and structure to the state militias initially induced new enthusiasm for the African American militiaman. Throughout this period (1898-1903), these events served as example after example where the trained black citizen soldiers of the state had opportunities to make positive contributions; yet only one, the War with Spain, even came close to acknowledging their abilities. And, even then they only achieved recognition for their perceived immunity of disease, not the worth of a fighting man. Conversely, the circumstances surrounding these events illustrate something more. Disappointed and discouraged, but not defeated, the African American citizen soldiers of Galveston and San Antonio fought their own battle at home to demonstrate their willingness to serve their state and country in times of peace and war.

Disappointment

Even as the chance arrived for African American volunteers to fight, the majority of the black troops had to endure the social restriction of serving under white officers. Of all the U.S. black volunteers from Illinois, Kansas, Alabama, Virginia, Ohio, North Carolina, and Massachusetts, only Ohio and North Carolina sent regiments commanded by African Americans.[1] Unfortunately, Adjutant General Mabry, who years before had continuously complimented the efforts and training of the African American citizen soldiers of Texas, decided that "it will not be best to give the colored battalion a place in any of the three white regiments that are to be organized, and they will have to wait until the next call for troops."[2] Neither Mabry nor Texas Democratic Governor Charles Allen Culberson tried to overcome the social limitations of mixing black and white officers within a regimental organization, place black officers in positions of authority over white troops, or could bring themselves to raise an entire black regiment.

As Mabry announced his decision in Austin not to include black troops in the first call for volunteers in 1898, Galveston's patriotic black community crowded into Topical Hall on Market Street that same evening where "enthusiastic and patriotic speeches were made by different colored speakers."[3] A total of fifty names appeared on

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[1] Command of the Third North Carolina was given to James H. Young, a former slave who had graduated from college and had served as the customs collector at the port of Wilmington. The Ninth Ohio was led by Charles Young, the Army's only black regular officer who had been acting as the military instructor at Wilberforce College in Ohio. See Marvin Fletcher, "The Black Volunteers in the Spanish-American War," *Military Affairs* 38, no. 2 (April 1974): 48-53.

[2] "Will Have to Wait," *Galveston Daily News,* April 28, 1898.

[3] "Colored Men Enlisting," *Galveston Daily News,* April 27, 1898.

the enlistment rolls at this meeting, including four from the Lincoln Guards.[4] Meanwhile, in San Antonio news of the Adjutant General's decision prompted Captain Robert Ellis of the Excelsior Guards to express his frustration to Mabry by characterizing the decision "as a disgrace" and conveyed his opinion that "now that the time has come when we can show to the world what we can do and what we are willing to do, we have to wait and let white men come from all over the state and fill out the white company's [*sic*] and most of them are men that have never taken any interest in the state guards."[5] Ellis, having completed the enrollment of 100 men into his company, asserted to Mabry that "as there will be three regiments of infantry, and one of cavalry, we think that we ought to have one of the regiments of infantry."[6] Mabry responded with the hollow excuse that "the number of men required was secured before the colored battalion was reached."[7]

After Mabry's departure at the head of the volunteers from Texas, Major Eugene Bowles, commanding the Battalion of Colored Infantry, communicated more delicately with Mabry's replacement, Adjutant General Alfred Prior Wozencraft. Anticipating a second call for volunteers, Bowles requested "to organize in addition to the five (5) companies of the Colored Batt, T.V. Guard (7) seven more companies, making the whole a regimental organization: so as to be the better prepared for early mobilization in

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[4] These four men included Dr. L. M. Wilkins, the battalion's surgeon, and Lincoln Guards' Private Charles B. Brooks, Sergeant John Cooper, and Private Austin Tyler.

[5] "Capt. Ellis Kick," *San Antonio Light,* May 1, 1898.

[6] Ibid.

[7] "Mabry's Reply," *San Antonio Light,* May 5, 1898.

event of a second call for vols, by the President."[8] McKinley eventually called for an additional 75,000 troops on May 25 and, according to the *Galveston Daily News*, had "let it be known that he would like to have an opportunity given to negro [*sic*] volunteers to be taken in."[9] This presidential decision, coupled with the congressional authorization of ten U.S. volunteer infantry regiments on May 10, facilitated the creation of four so-called "Immune" regiments comprised of black troops thought to have resistance to deadly tropical diseases.

In Texas, the state's leaders continued to ignore its black militiamen, but the citizen soldiers continued to press the issue. On June 8, a committee of African American citizens in San Antonio, represented by physician J. S. Cameron, attorney R. A. Campbell, former Major Jacob Lyons, Mark D. Brown, and J. L. Oliver, pleaded with Governor Culberson "that as a matter of simple justice to encourage Patriotism, to the end that all classes of Citizens of this Great State should be accorded an equal chance to volunteer in the defense of the flag of our American country, . . . there will be no humiliating consideration imposed, do urgently appeal to His Excellency, that he organize a REGIMENT OF COLORED TROOPS."[10] The committee obtained endorsements from three of San Antonio's prominent white citizens, U.S. District Judge Robert B. Green, U.S. District Clerk Carlos Bee, and attorney Ralph Blair, who wrote

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[8] Eugene O. Bowles to A. P. Wozencraft, May 18, 1898, Record Group 401, Texas State Archives (cited hereafter TSA), Austin.

[9] "Colored Volunteers," *Galveston Daily News*, June 26, 1898.

[10] J. S. Cameron, M.D., R. A. Campbell, Jacob Lyons, M. D. Brown, and J. L. Oliver to C. A. Culberson, June 8, 1898, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin.

that "they are the best representatives for intelligence and character of their race in this community" and "you can put the utmost confidence in them."[11] One day later on the evening of June 9, at Holmes' Hall on Market Street, sixty members of Galveston's African American community, led by physician Louis M. Wilkins and William H. Noble, newspaper editor and publisher, resolved to "organize a colored company to be the nucleus of a regiment to be raised in Texas."[12] This meeting characterized Governor Culberson's inaction as "unjust" and strongly requested President McKinley "to accord to the colored troops the same privileges accorded white troops raised in the same section of country, and that, so far as it is practicable to secure the efficiency and effectiveness of the army, that colored officers be appointed to all grades and ranks in colored regiments."[13] These citizens also appealed to Republican U.S. Representative Robert Hawley of Galveston "to use his influence among congressmen of the house of representatives and the senate to effect the spirit and purpose of these resolutions."[14]

Years earlier Hawley, working with Norris Wright Cuney, had rejected the political agenda of the so-called "Lily-White" movement within the Texas State Republican Party. Cuney's daughter later described her father's sentiments regarding Hawley when she wrote "there was no white man in the State for whom he felt a deeper

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[11] Carlos Bee to C. A. Culberson, June 27, 1898, Record Group 401, TSA, Austin. R. B. Green to C. A. Culberson, ibid. Ralph Blair to C. A. Culberson, ibid. Both Green and Bee later recommended Lyons for an officer's commission in "one of the colored regiments now being or will be organized." See Robert B. Green and Carlos Bee to Secretary of War, October 10, 1899, Adjutant General Office's, Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[12] "Negroes to Organize," *Galveston Daily News*, June 10, 1898.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

affection and he worked unceasingly for his success" in his bid to represent the Tenth U.S. District.[15] When Cuney died in San Antonio on March 3, 1898, Hawley arranged for a special train to transport his remains to the family home in Galveston. The Excelsior Guards served as an honor guard and later marched with the Lincoln Guards in the grand funeral procession to Lakeview Cemetery. Historian Elizabeth Turner sums up the loss of Cuney most succinctly when she states "once gone, no single person took his place; members of the black community lost an ombudsman who had been able to navigate successfully through the tense currents of racial prejudice."[16] With the petition of his African American constituents in hand, Hawley, on June 14, acted on their behalf. He requested that the Ninth U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment (U.S.V.I.) contain at least two companies from the black communities of Galveston and Houston. Much to their disappointment, the African American citizen soldiers of Texas never achieved a regiment of their own.[17]

Hawley also asked that Henry A. Chandler, who may have worked for Hawley, receive a captain's commission as the commanding officer of the company of Galveston's black volunteers. Chandler began recruiting for the newly designated Company L, Ninth U.S.V.I., in the Island City on July 1. Only days prior, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that it expected "the Lincoln Guard [to] [en]list," but only three of

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[15] Maud Cuney-Hare, *Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribune of the Black People* (1913; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995), 216.

[16] Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community: Religion and Reform in Galveston, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 229.

[17] See Roger Dryden Cunningham, "'A Lot of Fine, Sturdy Black Warriors': Texas's African American 'Immunes' in the Spanish-American War," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 108 (January 2005): 345-67.

the initial recruits had formerly served in the Lincoln Guards.[18] None of the three, Amos Banks, George Green, or Alex Rhodes, were mustered into the new company signaling a possible rejection by the mustering-in officer or surgeon. Louis Taylor, commanding the Lincoln Guards at this time, failed to make any contemporary accounts regarding the activities leading up to the formation of this company, but two members of the Lincoln Guards, Burnett Mapson and Wallace Seals, did serve in the company, named for Hawley. Enthusiasm inundated the black community as these men began to drill. With the exception of Chandler, all the other commissioned officers were African Americans. First Sergeant Mapson accepted a company flag "and three hearty cheers were given" in front of Joseph Labadie's store located at the corner of Tremont and Mechanic streets.[19] And, upon their departure, "about 700 black and a large number of white folk gathered" to see the Hawley Guards leave for their training camp in New Orleans to prepare for war.[20]

The Guards changed their company designation to "G" after arriving as the seventh company in the regiment at camp. Joined by units from New Orleans, one each from Donaldsonville and New Iberia, Louisiana, and the one from Houston, the men from Galveston quickly established themselves as some of the best drilled in camp. Chandler reported that "one of the field officers said yesterday that he could hardly believe that company [*sic*] G had not been drilling at least a month, as they put up such a

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[18] "The Colored Recruits," *Galveston Daily News*, June 21, 1898.

[19] "Colored Company's Flag," *Galveston Daily News*, June 28, 1898.

[20] "Colored Soldiers Depart," *Galveston Daily News*, July 1, 1898.

good drill on the campus."[21] Chandler also complimented Seals's ability as an officer by noting "Wallace Seals, our second lieutenant, is a good drill master." The Ninth Volunteers eventually received orders to Cuba, landing at Santiago near the end of August to guard Spanish prisoners near the battlefield at San Juan Hill. Moving to San Luis, about thirty miles away, the troops occupied themselves with typical garrison duties, building roads, guarding telegraph lines, and patrolling for bandits. The volunteers remained in Cuba until their return to the United States. Mustering out at Camp Meade in Middletown, Pennsylvania in May 1899, the Hawley Guards soon returned to Galveston.

Even as the African American community viewed the war as an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism, to advance their social status, and to recapture some of their eroding civil rights, many in the white community feared these veterans expected new social privileges in society. Far from receiving a hero's welcome along the way, the black North Carolina volunteers faced racial violence at Macon and Atlanta, Georgia, and the black militiamen from Illinois experienced the wrath of the white citizenry and police force upon their arrival at the train depot in Nashville, Tennessee. These incidents support that the white supremacy spewing political campaigns of the late 1890s in the South had further emboldened those who sought to keep African Americans in their subservient place in society. Even the Republican Party's national platform had dropped its call for legislative and executive actions to guarantee a free ballot in the South in favor of promoting business interests. Race baiting by politicians and

[21] "The Hawley Guards," *Galveston Daily News*, July 8, 1898.

newspaper editors created the atmosphere of fear of "Negro domination" and resulted in numerous political restrictions for African Americans, including property requirements, literacy examinations, and the one-party primary across the South. Therefore, instead of the war serving a positive social purpose, it only illustrated that racial fears and attitudes of white superiority prevailed across the South and the nation.[22]

Disaster

Still considered the worst natural disaster in U.S. history, the Great Storm of September 8, 1900 smashed Galveston with estimated winds of 140 m.p.h. and a 15.7 ft. storm surge that killed over six thousand residents, roughly 16 percent of the city's population, and hundreds more died inland. Bearing the brunt of the 1900 Storm, those city wards situated on the Gulf side of the island, where the majority of the Lincoln Guards called home, suffered greatly. The 1900 Storm briefly erased the social distinctions between white and black as people from all over the city gathered together in places of safety. Daniel Ransom, an avid swimmer who worked as a laborer and enlisted as a private in the Lincoln Guards in 1890, ascending to the rank of sergeant during his five-year militia career, escaped his collapsing home by diving into the rising water. Over the course of two and one-half hours during the early evening hours of September 8, Ransom rescued forty-five people from the treacherous waves.

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[22] Fletcher, "Black Volunteers in the Spanish-American War." See C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, vol. IX (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); Morgan Kousser *The Shaping of Southern Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Michael Perman *Struggle for Mastery, Disenfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Unfortunately, the Storm also took one of the Lincoln Guards' best, Wallace Seals, who perished with his wife in the rising water.[23] Once the water began to subside, relief efforts from all over state and the United States began to arrive. The survivors simply could not handle the amount of dead bodies, those of their neighbors, and those of the many animals that lay under the torn and twisted structures that once housed a beautiful seaside city. The storm-soaked ground eliminated any attempts at burying bodies as they started to decay and literally fall apart in the heat: the only solution possible hinged on burial at sea. The initial attempts to transport the remains to the sea only resulted in those bodies returning to the beach with the tides; therefore, the Galveston's medical community decided to burn the bodies on the beaches. The smell of burning flesh lasted for almost three months. Ransom, assisting with the funeral pyres, described the efforts when he noted that "they gathered up all the dead bodies they could find . . . piled them up, just like you cross-pile cord wood, and pour oil all over them and burn them."[24]

As episodes of lawlessness occurred across the city, government officials placed the city under martial law, but could not muster its police force or any of its local militia companies, either black or white. Characterizing these groups as "completely demoralized by the terrible calamity," city leaders and citizens were "exhausted, unnerved and broken in body, mind and spirit by the strain through which they have passed, Galveston had to rely on state assistance."[25] Texas State Adjutant General

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[23] *1900 Galveston Storm Death Lists*, "S," http://www.gthcenter.org/exhibits/storms/1900/victims/vicS.htm (accessed June 28, 2007).

[24] Turner, *Women, Culture, and Community*, 48.

[25] Paul Lester, *The Great Galveston Disaster* (Philadelphia: H. W. Kelley, 1900), 253.

Thomas Scurry ordered three white militia companies from Houston to restore order, but failed to mobilize its black company.

Prior to the arrival of white militia troops, some survivors sought to take advantage of the absence of order. Reportedly many who worked the clean-up scavenged dead bodies or looted. Initially, these accounts failed to identify the color of the culprit's skin; nevertheless, as historians Patricia Bixel and Elizabeth Turner assert "indications that prejudice clouded the picture, however, came when reports identified blacks as looting, stealing, or acting as 'ghouls' by cutting off the fingers for jewelry and ransacking the pockets of the dead."[26] *The Great Galveston Disaster,* a book published in 1900 "containing a full and thrilling account of the most appalling calamity of modern times," describes throughout its text how the "ghouls were holding an orgie [*sic*] over the dead," "the majority of these men were negroes [*sic*]," "most of these vultures were negroes," and "the negroes refused to help bury the dead for either love or money."[27] This contemporary publication also contains an inflammatory image (see Figure 11) of an African American man removing a ring from the lifeless body of a white woman.

The Storm had broken the social and racial barrier in the city. Blacks and whites had huddled for safety together, rescued each other's lives, and during the clean-up that followed the Cotton Jammers' Association, an African American labor union, joined with the white longshoreman's union, the Screwmen's Benevolent Association in

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[26] Patricia Bellis Bixel and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, *Galveston and the 1900 Storm: Catastrophe and Catalyst* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 77-8.

[27] Lester, *Great Galveston Disaster,* i, 78, 225. These three quotes are only a sample of this source that continually describes African Americans as "ghouls." Only a few accounts mention whites, but several of these state that they were "non-natives."

clearing debris. Still, no African American received an appointment on the Central Relief Committee, created in the wake of the Storm to deal with the massive clean-up and rebuilding tasks that lay ahead in the city. Galveston's government officials failed to recognize the abilities of its black inhabitants and as the stories of atrocities grew the city that had once tolerated the presence of two African American militia companies would never view their black neighbors the same way as before the Storm, thus contributing to the strengthening of racial intolerance at the turn of the century.[28]

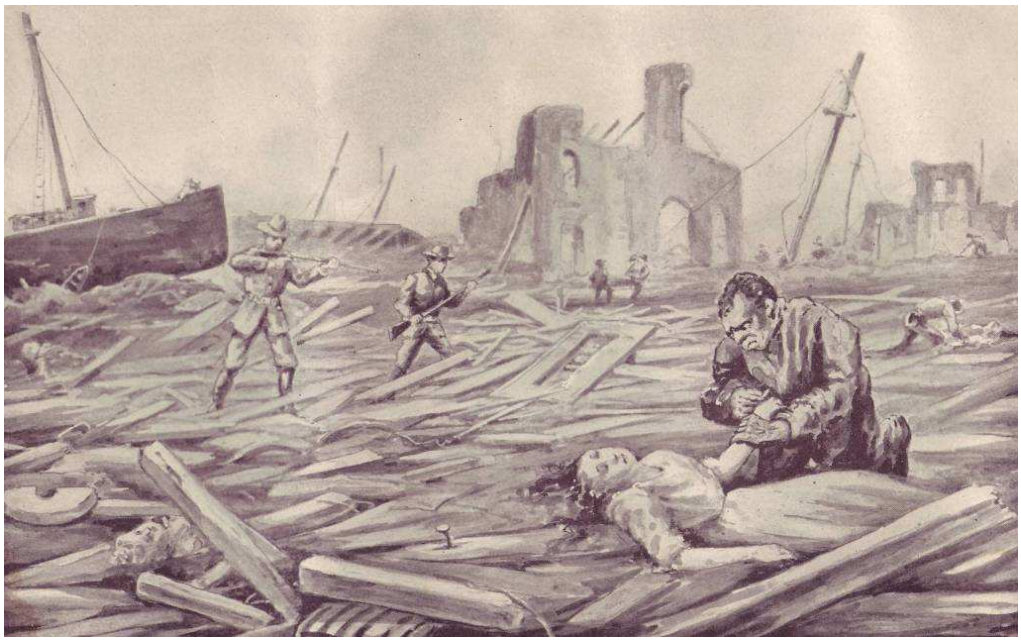

Figure 11. "Shooting Vandals Engaged in Robbing the Bodies of the Victims. *From Lester 1900*.

[28] Bixel and Turner, *Galveston and the 1900 Storm.* See Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., *Death from the Sea* (New York: Dial Press, 1972); Casey Edward Greene and Shelley Henley Kelly, ed. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000); Erik Larson, *Isaac's Storm: A Man, A Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1999).

Dissolution

In March 1900 the *Dallas Morning News* printed an editorial from the *Chicago Chronicle* that reported the involvement of African American regular army troops in rescuing a comrade from the county jail at El Paso. This incendiary act culminated in the shooting of one soldier and one citizen causing the *Chronicle* to record that while "the colored brother makes a good soldier during actual campaigning he is a particularly unpleasant proposition when filled with whisky, armed with a musket and turned loose in a peaceful community." The paper continued by advocating that these troops "should either be stationed at remote frontier posts or assigned to duty in some good Republican State, like Massachusetts, where they will be *personaie gratae* to the population."[29]

The circumstances surrounding the demise of the Lincoln Guards remain unclear. Louis Taylor, commanding the Lincoln Guards in 1900, successfully submitted the company's muster roll for that year. A year later, the company that had chosen the name of the Great Emancipator and accounted for twenty-one years of service to the State of Texas no longer existed as a unit in the Texas Volunteer Guard. Its previous official designation as Company C passed to the city's newest African American militia company, the Hawley Guards. Led by veterans from the war in Cuba, this company joined the Battalion of Colored Infantry in 1901. Meanwhile in San Antonio, the Excelsior Guards maintained their organization into the new century and together these units served despite the trials and tribulations of the previous years, and the years to come.

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[29] "Current Comment," *Dallas Morning News*, March 2, 1900.

The State of Texas continued to ignore its militiamen in the years that followed the War with Spain. Adjutant General Scurry commented to the governor of Texas in his bi-annual report under the heading of "State Appropriations" that "the heading of this subject is apt to be misleading for there have been none for several years."[30] Major Jacob Lyons again briefly assumed command of the Battalion of Colored Infantry, serving until his replacement, James P. Bratton of Austin, succeeded him on February 15, 1902. Attempting to restore the confidence of the black citizen soldiers, Bratton organized a camp of instruction for the battalion at Houston in August 1902. Held at Emancipation Park just south of the city, the encampment, dubbed Camp Kirby, boosted the attendance of 230 men from the still existing four companies of the battalion. The military gathering took on the appearance of previous encampments with camp duties, guard mounting, company and battalion drill as well as commissioned and non-commissioned officer instruction. The key feature of the camp occurred on August 11 when the city's black community witnessed a sham battle that expended 3500 rounds of blank ammunition. The Excelsior Guards achieved only a third place showing for its performance while the Hawley Guards received the gold award for the best company in camp. The award was not surprising. These African American citizen soldiers, only two months previous, had achieved "special favorable mention" for "excellence in drill, good

[30] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1899-1900* (Austin: Von Boeckman, Schutze & Co., State Printers, 1900), 58.

care of Government property and strict compliance with general orders No. 41" from Colonel Jules R. Muchart, inspector-general of the Texas Volunteer Guards.[31]

Also occurring in 1902, the ratification of the poll tax measure became law in Texas. This suffrage requirement, repeatedly introduced by Alexander W. Terrell, a Democrat that represented Travis County in the state legislature, sought to eliminate all irresponsible voters, those described by historian Michael Perman as "illiterate, poor, or purchasable."[32] Historian Morgan Kousser contends that the ratification of this amendment in 1902 was "the quiet climax of a long drive by a few men which succeeded when the opposition became dormant."[33] And, C. Vann Woodward asserts that the earlier actions that led to "the suppression of the Populist revolt, appropriation of some Populist slogans by the Democrats, reaction against Negro voting during the agrarian uprising, and the consolidation of the one-party system" had already taken their toll on African American voting rights.[34] This virtual elimination of the black vote had succeeded primarily through the portrayal of negative African American stereotypes.

On January 21, 1903, the new National Militia Law, commonly referred to as the Dick Act for Republican U.S. Senator Charles Dick of Ohio, received approval from the president, prompting the Twenty-Eighth Legislature of Texas to pass its new Militia Law

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[31] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1901-1902* (Austin: Von Boeckman, Schutze & Co., State Printers, 1902), 198; "Inspection of the Militia," *Dallas Morning News*, June 29, 1902; "Negro Encampment," ibid., August 12, 1902; "Negro Encampment Ended," ibid., August 14, 1902. See Jacob Lyons to Thomas Scurry, July 16, 1901, Record Group 401, T.S.A., Austin. For the order disbanding Brazos Light Guard, see *Report of the Adjutant General, 1899-1900*, 126.

[32] Perman, *Struggle for Mastery*, 273.

[33] Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics*, 205.

[34] Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 343.

on July 1, 1903. The new federal law received, at least initially, popular support from all the citizen soldiers of Texas since it provided for the arms, uniforms, service pay, and "attendance of the organized militia in maneuvers and field instruction of the army" without cost to the state.[35] No longer would the citizen soldiers of Texas suffer through their duties with out-dated weapons and equipment, with uniforms purchased with their own money, or with appropriations for training linked to the whims of legislators.[36]

However, when the black militiamen of San Antonio and Galveston, with those of the rest of the battalion, formed again at Emancipation Park at Houston in July 1903, the state's white militiamen traveled in October to Fort Riley, Kansas for maneuvers with U.S. Army troops. The African American component fell back to the days of citizen committees hosting their training. The battalion turned out 247 officers and men present with each company reporting over fifty men in attendance, a modest increase from the previous year. Major Spencer Hutchins of the Texas National Guard (T.N.G.) acted as the president of the board of inspectors for the encampment. Again, the Hawley Guards outperformed the other companies, scoring 141.3 points out of a possible 160 given for drill and inspections. Hutchins recounted that the Guards "presented themselves for inspection with their rifles in first-class shape," which seems confusing. Perhaps he recorded their condition based upon the age of the rifles as Captain Tony Smith of the Hawley Guards had conveyed the condition of his weapons as "condemned" earlier that year. The board of inspectors described the camp as "a

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[35] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for 1902-03* (Austin: n.p., n.d.), 4-5.

[36] Ibid.

thorough success and that much has been accomplished, and take pleasure in commending Major Bratton, who is thoroughly competent to bring his battalion to a high standard of perfection."[37] Three months later, the *Dallas Morning News* reported an incident that occurred during maneuvers at Fort Riley, Kansas. During a skirmish between white militiamen of Texas and regular U.S. Army black cavalrymen, the paper detailed how three privates from the Texas regiment "were badly handled" and that the officers "will not allow their men to leave their tents at night" signaling the possible violent outcomes of joint exercises. The new federal law that should have paved the way for improved conditions in the state guard for African Americans, but for them those changes failed to materialize. Instead of attending training exercises with U.S. Army troops, they had to look to support from the black community of Houston.[38]

The years that followed pointed to even more deterioration. The black militia units in San Antonio and Galveston remained active within their communities, visible in parades and ceremonies, but never conducted training above the company level, their basic unit. When retired U.S. Army General Luther Hare traveled to Galveston in March 1904 to inspect the Hawley Guards, he stated that "in the State there are now four regiments of infantry, a squadron of cavalry which is arranged to be expanded into a regiment, two light batteries, and one sea coast battery."[39] Even though General Hare had reviewed the Guards on Ball Square the night before, the entire battalion of colored

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[37] Ibid.,104.

[38] "Ill Feeling Grows," *Dallas Morning News,* October 24, 1903; Muster-in roll, Hawley Rifles, Texas National Guard, Record Group 401, T.S.A., Austin.

[39] "Gen. Hare's Visit," *Galveston Daily News,* March 31, 1904.

infantry remained conspicuously absent from his comments. The next month, the Excelsior Guards, unable to form for inspection, received Special Order No. 28 from the Adjutant General's Office officially disbanding them. The final blow to the Hawley Guards came in 1906. Adjutant General John A. Hulen acknowledged "the colored companies made an exceptionally good show at drills and parades, and cared for their arms and equipment as well as the average white company," but he mustered out the entire battalion "on account of the inadvisability of having both white and colored troops in such a small organization as the State maintains."[40] Hulen stated that "the men seem to take considerable interest in their organizations" and could maintain sufficient enlisted strength, though he admonished the officers as "not equal to the positions held by them" and "were too fond of the 'show' feature, and spent much of their time in wrangling and in dissension."[41] Four months later in Brownsville, Texas, racial tensions over segregated facilities between white citizens and members of the all-black Twenty-fifth U.S. Infantry Regiment ignited accusations against the regiment following the shooting death of a white bartender and the wounding of a white policeman after the infantrymen were barred from entering the town. The investigation that followed claimed that the African American soldiers were guilty and when none of them provided a name to the authorities, President Theodore Roosevelt dishonorably discharged 167 men from the regiment. The state and its white elites not only could no longer tolerate black citizen soldiers within its militia organization, but this incident proved that they could not

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[40] *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for Two Years ending December 31, 1906* (Austin: n.p., n.d.), 10.

[41] Ibid.

longer accept African Americans as federal soldiers either. With the demise of the black militia companies, the state terminated a valuable instrument of pride, manhood, and one of the hallmarks of citizenship within the black community.[42]

Conclusion

From 1880 to 1906 over six hundred African American men served as citizen soldiers in Galveston and San Antonio. Official and public records reveal specific details of the social and economic status of these black militiamen within their respective communities. Their activities, both as civilians and as soldiers, illustrate their motivations to serve and how they faced the adversity of racism and segregation. The presence of these black citizen soldiers, a minority group within the state's military organization and in their own community, demonstrated throughout this period that race relations still possessed some flexibility.

The Texas Militia Law of 1879 gave African Americans the legal right to establish militia companies in their communities. For blacks, these units comprised one component of the many self-improvement institutions that allowed African Americans to gain solidarity as a group. Company muster rolls illustrated that the militia brought together men who hailed from Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia with those from the rural counties of the southern and Midwest states. Militia participation brought the more affluent blacks in the community together with the laboring class. Physicians, clergymen, and veterans from the U.S. Army served mostly as officers; still, laborers

[42] See John D. Weaver, *The Brownsville Raid* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992).

could, and did, become officers in the local company. The lack of prior military service did not eliminate anyone from leadership positions, but these veterans brought valuable military knowledge to the black militia. Many officers often held positions of leadership simultaneously in the church, in business, in the local Republican Party, or in one of many local fraternal groups. Of these, militia and political participation offered African Americans the largest opportunity to display and partake in their rights as American citizens. But only militia membership acted as a constant and highly visible reminder of that citizenship.

The dominant white society in San Antonio and Galveston tolerated the presence of these militia companies and seemed to acknowledge them as citizens even while rejecting them as equals. Black labor fueled some of the economic needs of each city and since the numbers of eligible black voters could bolster the election of city officials; local politicians could not afford to ignore them completely. In San Antonio, many of these politicians acted to guarantee the arms and equipment of the militiamen while in Galveston, a stronger political leadership bloc of African Americans served the needs of their people. And, German-born employers in each city proved the most sympathetic, allowing their employees to participate in militia activities. Across the state, African American political strength bolstered the campaigns of third-party reform candidates that peaked in a narrow loss for the Populist candidate, Jerome C. Kearby, for governor in 1896. Fearing a loss of political power, the state's Democratic Party began a systematic process to disenfranchise black voters assisted by a program of racist stereotypes that eventually led to the destruction of the Populist movement and the ineffectiveness of the

state's Republican Party. These actions severed the African American from the political process and reinforced racial fears and tensions that culminated in the demise of the militia.

How the many Adjutant Generals of the state treated the black citizen soldiers varied. Initially, some like King and Mabry, granted some of their requests, ordered and coordinated their training, and even praised African Americans' dedication and interest. Yet, when opportunities came, as with the War with Spain came, or with rescue efforts in Galveston in 1900, neither the Adjutant General nor the governor could overcome the social stigma surrounding the placement of blacks in positions of authority over whites. This demonstrated that while African Americans had obtained recognition for their military capabilities under certain circumstances, they could never break the boundaries of social segregation.

The state provided only minimal financial support during this period, requiring the individual black citizen soldier to shoulder the burden of his and his militia's company's expenses. These costs were no easy matter for many who occupied the lowest rungs of society's economic ladder. Surrounded by prejudice, African American militiamen in Galveston and San Antonio could not attend camps of instruction with white soldiers, nor did they receive equipment of equal condition. Despite the obstacles placed in their way, these black citizen soldiers served. No doubt many departed the ranks frustrated and angry, but others remained. When they received no appropriations from the state, they organized themselves and, with the assistance of other African Americans, conducted their own training exercises. They pressed for their "equal" right

to accomplish such training and insisted on the same transportation and instruction received by the state's white companies. As they continued to receive old, second-hand rifles, they requested replacements. The militia companies paraded through the main streets of Galveston and San Antonio, conducted military training at their armory and at camps of instruction, traveled by train across the state in uniform and under arms, and expended ammunition for both military target practice and at ceremonial functions for the black community. These military activities confirmed and displayed their status as citizens.

Mostly forgotten or dismissed by some as members of insignificant social clubs, the African American officers and men who served faithfully from 1880 to 1906 for the State of Texas in its militia organizations should obtain credit for their accomplishments. With the exception of the few black volunteers who saw duty in Cuba, the African American citizen soldier fought a different kind of battle. Those men did not fight a foe in a country or colony far away, but found them in the society in which they lived. They provided an immense sense of pride for the black community by demonstrating the progress achieved since their freedom. Aspiring to a higher social status within a segregated society, these men showcased their citizenship through militia participation. These African American citizen soldiers modeled themselves as loyal and devoted citizens in hopes that their efforts could stem the rising tide that continued to wash away their civil and political rights. Despite the prejudice and bigotry they received during these years, their level of patriotism, perseverance, and commitment are worthy of analysis and recognition. While not facing a foreign enemy, they exhibited the courage

to fight for what they believed was legally guaranteed to all citizens by the U.S. Constitution. Arguably, when the black militia companies suffered dissolution, that act firmly cemented the status of blacks as second-class citizens within U.S. society.

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